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[A FATEFUL MEETING.]

CHRISTINE'S REVENGE;

OR,

O'HARA'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much dis-
dain,
Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
The manner of my pity, wanting pain.

Two days before Christmas—a bright, bracing Christmastide—with icicles on the bare tree boughs in the park glittering in the sun's rays, a north-east wind sweeping round street corners, and rushing along country roads like a giant in a frolic, the shops in the West-end ablaze or aglow (according to the wares displayed)—ablaze with precious stones, golden locketts, and bracelets, silver hunting cups, and tea services, or aglow with richly-dyed silks, velvets and cashmeres; bonnets and feathers, and flowers and ribbons for the adornment of the beautiful or the plain; carriages, cabs, omnibuses loaded with human freight; merry folks on the road, most of them to the houses of their friends, where they were about to spend Christmas, or else busy with the plans of intended purchases.

Roland O'Hara was not of these merry ones; he was lonely, cold, poorly clad. He had a few days' holiday before him, which would last till after Boxing Day, but he had no money to spend, no friends to visit. He sought warmth, for he had scant fuel in the poor attic which he

called home, so he walked into Kensington Museum, and there the pleasant atmosphere gradually soothed and comforted his pain. He found his way to the picture gallery, and looked rather listlessly about him for a while. He loved paintings, and in some moods was an enthusiast for art, but to-day the young man felt lonely and sad, and savage at heart. He flung himself full length on a bench in a retired corner, and he began to discourse with his own thoughts.

His fancies were as numerous as blackberries would be next September all along the feet of Carrig Flynn, that huge mountain in a land of mountains where lay the cottage home of Roland. He had come to London to seek work of a more ambitious kind than the valley of Morah afforded. He had found work hard, uncongenial, ill paid.

Now he was longing, oh! so fiercely, for a breath of heather-scented mountain air, for the sound of the river as it rushed over its huge boulder stones towards the sea.

"If I could sit on the brow of Carrig Flynn," said Roland to himself, "and see all the mountains grouped about me, with the black heaven in the rear; and if I knew that in a while a lightning shaft would glance out of its darkness and make the whole land bright with its lurid glare; if I knew that presently the hills would resound with the artillery of heaven, how I would revel in the sight and in the sound. Here all is tame and curbed and measured. I know that around me surges the proud world, which despises, oppresses, and neglects the poor. In the Row ride men and women in the season who would give three hundred guineas for a finger ring, while other men may die of

hunger in the garrets close at hand, and still the world smiles on, chatters, dances, drives."

Thus far Roland's thoughts had run on regularly, a train of consecutive argument, which had for its object the demonstration of the folly, selfishness and pride of the upper classes, the stiff, unnatural life of the town, the glorious freedom and beauty of untamed nature, where the mountains stand clothed in purple heather, or snowy mantles, as the seasons change; where the rivers rush, where the forests wave, and the birds sing.

Thus far, and then fatigue conquered the alert brain, the fervid fancy, the restless, angry heart, and Roland's eyes closed; voices were in his ears—the voices of home, the tender, mellow tones of his Irish mother, the laughter of his young brothers, the lowing of the kine as the sunset hour approached.

Home! the homeliest that any man could claim; one of the humblest cots in green Ireland, but beloved all through the toiling days, dreamed of through all the nights, while Roland sojourned a stranger in a strange land. The young man fell asleep on the long bench, and he slept and smiled as he slept.

The hours went on; the winter's sun dipped low and red in the heavens. Footsteps approached the bench where Roland lay, and they paused—paused for a long while. A girl was watching his sleeping face, studying its faultless curves, and wondering with an artist's wonder at its dark, strange beauty.

A face like one of Murillo's gipsies—swarthy, but with the rich blood glowing through on the dusky cheeks, the lips and chin of an Athenian god, the nostril curved and proud and fine, the

brow broad, the hair thick, raven black, cut short, but curling crisply.

Roland O'Hara, the peasant lad of the valley of Morah, the under clerk, the drudge of a lawyer's office in Lincoln's Inn; and the girl, who was the girl who stood transfixed by the charm of his sombre beauty?

She was a slight creature, with great, dreamy, passionate eyes of darkest violet, fringed with silken lashes, raven black, and curling upwards; her hair was pale gold, it was plaited in one long massive plait, tied at the end with a piece of pale blue ribbon. The maiden wore a dress of brown cloth, made in the plainest, most unpretending manner, but her high heeled shoes and her brown kid gloves were of the daintiest; round her throat, slender and lily fair, she wore some rich dark fur, on her head a very ungainly hat of brown straw, crossed with an ugly ribbon of the same tint.

The face of the girl had the tints of an opening blush rose, the lips were coral red, the chin rather broad, the nose straight, delicate with haughty curves in the nostril, a proud, fair, aristocratic face, but what passionate possibilities were in those darkly fringed eyes!

The face of one who could dare all, when the stake was one on which she had set her heart, and this creature was so young. Scarcely fifteen summers had passed over the child's head, yet the spirit that peered through the window of those eyes might have existed for centuries.

They were wistful, veiled eyes, with the incipient promise of love, a promise that might be fulfilled or utterly disappointed. Elaine Harwood may die for a lover's sake or never love at all. The sleeper stirred, and muttered in his sleep, turned over, and rested one bronzed cheek on the shabby sleeve of his well-worn coat, and he smiled as if happiness had visited him in dreamland, a visitor he seldom received during his waking hours.

"Some day, yes, we may be free, and hold the soil, and it will yield us fruit in return for our labours." Then a cloud passed over the face of the sleeper; he sighed heavily, he clenched his hand, he spoke through shut teeth.

"Death to tyrants," he said.

Elaine listened with parted lips and shining eyes.

"What a sketch," she thought, "for an artist. Munro would make him a 'Greek Youth Sleeping,' or he would serve as a model for 'Youth' in Italian marble. Theobalds would ask him to go to his studio every day. Meanwhile what a pity he is of the lower class. If he awoke he would spoil all."

All at once Roland opened his black eyes and sat bolt upright, wide awake, staring hard at the slight child in brown. No blush dyed the fair proud face; composure as of an empress in every line of the haughty mouth; a cold stare such as she might have given to a picture or a statue in the Academy was all Elaine gave to Roland O'Hara; as for him, her beauty and the spell of it acted like magic on his whole being; the thrill of her presence made him feel giddy, intoxicated as with new wine.

He had had "dreams of fair women" as has every youth of nineteen gifted with the royal gift of imagination; but this being in a brown dress who had watched him while he slept, and now looked at him with proud yet passionate eyes—this being called into life unsuspected elements, set his pulses throbbing, his blood surging; whisperings were in his ears of what man had achieved in dim past ages for the love of woman.

He understood how Antony had lost Rome for the sake of Cleopatra, how war had raged for ten long years round the walls of old Troy for the cause of Helen's bright eyes and rose-red lips.

Like a spell. Was this woman-child in her brown dress an enchantress? A Circe weaving a web close, fine, strong as love, cruel as the grave; a web in which the man's heart was caught, amidst whose meshes it might writhe for years in unutterable torment. A bird trapped in the snare of a fowler.

The girl was no conscious Circe. More, she

had not a spice of what is called in common parlance coquetry in her nature; she had no love of power, only she had been reared in a school of aristocratic prejudice, and this had become part of herself. She was free of any haughty spurning of the vulgar, because they were too far beneath her for contempt, that was the code of her mother, and it was almost the religion of Elaine, so to speak.

People often become converts to other creeds than those learnt in childhood. Elaine had in her great capacity for original thought, but she was only fifteen years old.

Roland rose to his feet, doffed his cap, and ventured to stammer a few words—he knew not what—of apology. The girl spoke in tones cold, clear, and pitilessly sweet.

"I am studying in a school of art. They would pay you well there as a model, and, if you are poor—"

She glanced without an atom of scorn at his shabby boots and threadbare coat-sleeves. The hot blood surged over his swarthy face.

"Not poor enough for that. I have, I hope, brains to work."

"Brains, but you might still earn something as a model for two hours a day."

"Money," answered the lad, haughtily, "is not my chief aim."

"But you are poor," she persisted, pitilessly, "and it would be better to earn something than to sleep idly. Idleness leads the poor to commit much wrong."

It was the proudest preaching, such as the most humdrum of elderly district visitors might inflict upon some pleasure-seeking lad, or finery-loving damsel in some poverty-stricken home.

"Does she preach to me? Does she think I am a slave with no soul above the material shams which chain down one portion of humanity at the feet of the other half of it? Who is she? I will win her for my wife, if ever mortal man won mortal woman since time began!"

Roland was an enthusiast. Ambitious as Lucifer, despite his peasant home and his shabby clothes.

"Idleness, lady," he said, with a smile, "is what I most abhor. Did I not tell you I would rather work than condescend to sit as a lazy model for a sculptor or a painter?"

"Still you sleep in the day," the young lady pursued, pitilessly. "You ought to cultivate every moment of your time either to earn or to learn."

"And if I become a model, will you introduce me to a painter, and shall I see you?"

"You will see me when I take my lessons," she answered, gently, "and perhaps I might do something else for you."

"And what could you do, young lady?"

"I have friends who could do much, if they found you worthy and industrious."

"But I would rather be helped by you. I care nothing for your friends."

"Care!" she echoed, with a cold smile. "I don't know what you mean. My friends are always willing to help the deserving poor, if they will help themselves, as my mother says."

"I do not think, lady, I am deserving," said the young man. "I come of rebel stock, and am filled all through my soul with a sense of the wrongs which the rich inflict upon the poor. You would perhaps like to put me in prison, if you knew all that I think and feel!"

"You are Irish," Elaine said, calmly. "I knew that the moment I heard your accent, and Irish people are mostly rash, and reckless."

"Because they are oppressed."

Elaine smiled a sweeter smile than she had yet vouchsafed her headlong adorer.

"I am Irish also," she said; at least my father is, and I was born at Donnamore, in the county of Wicklow."

Roland's face flushed even to the roots of his raven hair; the next moment he was pale, and a worn look was under his eyes.

"You are the daughter of the earl?" he asked, quickly.

She bowed her little fair head, then held it aloft with a most superb dignity.

Oh, what a social gulf yawned between those two young creatures; each beautiful as spring time; each gifted with the royal gift of intellect; each filled with inarticulate yearnings after a better, and a beyond; each capable of a deep, undying affection; a passionate yielding up of self to the love of another.

The youth knew now that capability, it filled him like an inspiration at once and for ever; it would henceforth lead him whithersoever it willed, or over the stormiest waves of life's ocean, through the most flowery and sequestered thickets where love plants his blooming gardens. For the sake of the girl before him the young man would have cast himself into the fire, or into the water, or have risen to eminence after treading the stoniest earth paths with naked, bleeding feet. Sufferings! what were they compared to the bliss of clasping yonder fair girl in his arms—his wife—on some day in the golden future.

Oh, maddest of mad dreams! There yawned the social gulf; he might fling himself into its lowest depths, or he might sail on its surface in the gayest barge, but could he in either case ever span its breadth, and stand side by side with Elaine, and hold her hand, and say, "We are equal—we twain are one flesh?"

Roland, the peasant's son; Lady Elaine Harwood, the daughter of the Earl of Donnamore. Roland was of a truth a dreamer of dreams.

CHAPTER II.

There's a curl on her lip,
There's a dash in her eye;
Is it scorn? Is it hate?
Is there danger nigh? OLD BALLAD.

"I am Lady Elaine Harwood," the young girl said, quietly. "My mother would help you if you were quite deserving."

"I am quite undeserving."

"You do not wish to be helped?" Tell me," she added, "in what part of Ireland is your home?"

"On the Donnamore estate, Lady Elaine, in the valley of Morah. My father was a tenant of the earl."

"Ah, and you have come to London to seek work; so many do. My mother thinks it so terrible this spirit of unrest among our peasantry. Well, if you will tell me your address I know my mother will try and do something for you; get you a situation perhaps." She paused thoughtfully. "I heard of a gentleman who wanted a coachman."

Roland recoiled as if she had struck him a cruel blow on the face, such a blow as her slight hand could not inflict had she willed it.

"Lady Elaine, I will be no man's servant."

"You must be in some shape," she answered, quietly. "What are you now?"

"A clerk in a lawyer's office."

"And what are you paid?"

"Fifteen shillings a week."

"You would get double and your board as a coachman. It is foolish pride, yours. Tell me your address."

He handed her a shabby-rubbed card, on which was written: "Roland O'Hara, 59, Roland Street."

Lady Elaine's eyebrows went up.

"A card," she said; "how odd. Well, Roland O'Hara," looking at him, as he said to himself, as if he were a beggar at her gates whom she admired in his picturesque rags, and yet thought of as the dust on the highways—"well, Roland, you seem discontented, and that is wrong. Somebody will call on you and talk to you better than I can talk, for I am young, and I hope you will not turn from honest work. It is odd you are my father's tenant. Good-day."

She bowed her fair head and passed on, without vouchsafing him even a farewell smile.

Lady Elaine Harwood was gifted with the promise of a glorious beauty, such a birthright

as falls to the share of few mortal women. She possessed by nature the artistic temperament, a powerful imagination; an enthusiasm for the beautiful in all things, whether manifest in the magnificence of an autumn forest, in the verdure of green pastures, in the rush and sparkle of a river, in the gloomy grandeur of mountains, in the lurid majesty of storm, in the delicious delicacy of a rose, in the perfect modelling of a marble statue, or in a human face, pure and noble as that of this lad whom she had found sleeping along the bench.

She looked on Roland as what he was, a peasant's son. She thought it was a pity he had so many notions above his sphere; she hoped in her kind little heart that he would tame down, and become a humble, patient and industrious member of society. She was completely under the sway of her haughty mother, ruled by her in thought and in deed. What was latent in her had not yet showed itself; but, nevertheless, the germ was there of an intense and passionate romanticism, she would in time become as capable of sacrificing herself to an heroic ideal as was Charlotte Corday, or Joan of Arc, or our English philanthropic heroine, Grace Darling; besides all this, Lady Elaine's nature was loving; her affections were intense, clinging, passionate, as yet she loved desperately only one person, the cold-souled, proud mother, who was in reality totally different to her children.

Lady Donnamore was worshipped by her two daughters; she ruled them, not by the manifestations of her love, but by inspiring them with an adoration for her talents, which were superb. Lady Elaine at fifteen thought her mother's thoughts, lived her whole life by the measure of her mother's rule.

What chance had the wild Irish lad of winning one thought from this lofty little maiden save haughty pity? And if ever she should guess at his mad hopes, or come to the knowledge of his rash vow, annihilating disdain?

She walked on, and came upon a group sitting on a cushioned seat, two ladies and a girl about a year younger than herself; a slender, fragile creature of fourteen years, large-eyed, pale-cheeked, with the stamp of delicate health impressed on every line of the aristocratic little face.

Lady Clarice was listlessly turning over the leaves of a book of etchings of great, world-famed pictures. A stout lady was knitting rapidly, and talking German to a sallow lady with flashing black eyes, and thin, sinister lips. The stout lady was Fraulein Secker, the German governess of the earl's daughters; the other was Mademoiselle Mattelle, the French governess of the two young noblewomen.

"And where have you been?" asked the German lady, speaking in English to her pupil. "You have been studying the pictures for half an hour. It is quite wrong to wander alone in the museum, if the countess knew!"

"I have been studying a model, Fraulein Secker—a young peasant, who lay sleeping on a bench. Such a model would be invaluable at our school of art in Claude Street!"

"Ah! of what style is she—is her beauty?" asked mademoiselle, quickly.

"Sombre, magnificent, Spanish in colouring," Lady Elaine answered. "But it is not a girl, it is a young man."

The violet eyes of the little maiden did not see the quick look, half derision, half dismay that passed between her two foreign teachers.

"So?" said Fraulein, and she coughed. "Young ladies must not stare so at people of that sort; he might have insulted you by speaking to you."

"I spoke to him," her little ladyship, answered, gravely.

"You!" both the governesses cried, in shrill concert.

Lady Elaine calmly repeated to them the whole conversation she had had with Roland O'Hara. When she came to an end they both lectured her volubly.

Fraulein told her that her enthusiasm for art, and her desire to reform the masses, were very

laudable, but that it was imprudent to talk too freely to the lower classes.

"And you are growing up, ma chère," said Mademoiselle Mattelle, the French governess, taking up the theme. "You will be a woman soon, Lady Elaine, and to speak familiarly to a man—a young man, is not comme il faut. It is not as if you were a boy, a Lord Harwood. If you had been, and heir to the earldom, why a young man can speak to anybody—go anywhere."

Lady Elaine sat down by the side of her governesses, and she almost frowned, so close were the pencilled brows knit together. She was in a world of her own, where, young as she was, she mostly dwelt apart from her surroundings, dreaming her own dreams, weaving the web of her own fancies; by nature she was an enthusiast; the roots of passion were set deeply in her soul. She was a being of infinite possibilities, but her manner was cold; her bearing was haughty; she loved, as we said, intensely, only one being, her cold, imperious, proud countess mother.

This superb woman was in truth worshipped by the Ladies Elaine and Clarice, her daughters. Annabel, Countess of Donnamore, was a woman beautiful and cold as a marble statue of Diana. She was highly accomplished; she had read much; she was brilliant in conversation; she knew how to fascinate men; she was a worldling to her finger tips, ambitious of power, and anxious to goad the gentle earl, her husband, into the arena of politics.

She would have liked to rule the nation; she would have liked to set her foot on the necks of the people; she detested the educational movements of these latter days, because with education comes cultivated thought, and a peasant or a poor artisan who should aspire to cultivated thought was to her abhorrent.

All her tradespeople, servants, and dependents were compelled, metaphorically, to bite the dust in the presence of this great lady. She was the only daughter and heiress of a rich Scotch earl. The earl, her husband, was a man of wealth. He was the owner of fine estates in Wales as well as of Donnamore in Ireland, which estate alone brought him in a rent-roll of forty thousand a year.

Only one disappointment chequered this brilliant life of the Countess of Donnamore. She had no son, no heir to the title of her husband; that title would descend with the entailed estates to a nephew of Lord Donnamore's, James Fitzstephens, a very handsome, very reckless, very extravagant captain in the guards. Of him more anon.

"Now it is time for us to go to the carriage," cried Fraulein Secker, the German governess.

Fraulein was a fat, ruddy woman, with good-natured, ugly eyes and mouth. She was very plainly dressed, about forty years old, believing in the countess as in a goddess; was humble, energetic, faithful, very fond of saving money. She was an excellent teacher of her own language and of music.

Mademoiselle Mattelle, the French governess, was only twenty-eight years old. She was tall, slender, agile, graceful, with the grace of a panther. There was something rather cruel about her thin lips; she had a way of biting the lower one, and half smiling the while, that suggested to a close observer the idea of an animal preparing for a spring, sudden, swift and dangerous, upon a foe!

Mademoiselle's complexion was sallow, her nose was perhaps too long, but her great black flashing eyes were wonderful, brilliant as stars, full by turns of scorn, mischief, or merriment, at times sombre with a gloom that had something ominous, as of storms and tragedies past or to come. Her teeth shone white and glittering whenever she smiled; altogether Christine Mattelle's face was one to remember—nay, even to dwell on when once seen, a face to haunt a fever pillow or a restless, sleepless head on a stormy night, when the winds howl and the ghosts of past days rise up and mock us; not a face one would fain see at one's bedside in hours of pain; nothing of pity or of

love in those flashing, dazzling, black diamonds.

Mademoiselle wore a robe of soft grey, and a dark blue Indian shawl which she gathered about her with the grace of a duchess. Ladies Elaine and Clarice, accustomed to obey their governesses, walked on, one on each side of Fraulein Secker, towards the carriage which stood now waiting for them near the entrance gates.

Mademoiselle followed. She darted looks searching, eager, excited, around her, then she saw a young man whose arms were crossed upon his chest. His burning glances devoured every movement of Lady Elaine, every fold of her robe.

Every step of ground that she passed seemed consecrated in his eyes. He did not notice mademoiselle at first, although she looked back at him and gave him a glittering smile, then mademoiselle dropped a blue satin embroidered bag which she carried; this time the young man perceived the action, a few strides brought him to the spot. He picked up the bag, followed mademoiselle, then standing before her:

"Madame, you dropped this," he said.

Christine turned and looked at him in the red light of the wintry dying day, a swarthy, rich Murillo beauty, and the modelling of an Antinous, erect, slender, broad-chested, with long graceful limbs. Christine admired masculine beauty enormously, but she was a woman twenty-eight years old, and this lad of nineteen was after all little more than a child in her eyes. She smiled and took the bag.

"Thank you," she said. "Ah, monsieur, is it then you of whom the Lady Elaine speaks in such rapture?"

Christine watched Roland; she saw the crimson flush mount to the roots of his hair, then retire, and the lad's face seemed older in its strange pallor.

"I do not understand," began Roland O'Hara.

"Ah, pardon me, I am not blind; the Lady Elaine, my pupil, has been talking to you. Just now she left you radiant and excited; talked of what I will not flatter you by repeating. She is very pretty, is she not, monsieur?"

The Frenchwoman asked the question suddenly, but softly, in a confidential whisper.

Roland, who had been vowing wild vows, dreaming wild dreams during the last ten minutes, felt intoxicated by he knew not what mad hopes and insane surmises. Again he flushed, and again his heart beat so loudly that Christine could almost hear the strokes.

"I have a romantic soul," said Christine. "I have passed through the fire; I like to watch a love story on the stage, or off it. Will you meet me to-morrow evening at the Charing Cross Station under the clock at eight o'clock. Lady Elaine will send you a message?"

Then Christine bowed her head, and walked swiftly away.

Roland O'Hara stood looking after the receding figures of the governess and the young aristocrats like one in a stupor. He had fallen madly, unreasonably in love at first sight with an earl's daughter whom there seemed no more chance of his winning than there is that the two-year old urchin who cries for the large golden harvest moon will obtain the desire of his heart, still the wild boy had vowed his vow.

Something within him whispered that this consummation was not so impossible as it looked, and yet he was sure that the heart of his ladylove was closed against him as tightly as the Bank of England is closed against the thief in the gutter; and now comes this governess and tells him that this high-born little damsel is enraptured with him, and will send him a message to-morrow. Then was this marvellous love an electric light which had passed from his soul to hers, and set hers aflame like as was his own? He was deluded (naturally) into the absurd belief.

Could he have read the heart and thoughts of the earl's haughty little daughter he would have felt stung and "shamed through all his pulses," as it was, he went on from the Museum and through the thronged streets, amid the

crash and roll of carriages, the hum of human voices, like one who walks in a dream.

He had come out poor, wearied, discontented, but free at heart, free and fearless at heart, as the wild hawk which sailed above the summit of Carrig Flynn—free as the wild seagull whose loud shriek went out to welcome the storm on the tossing Atlantic which bounded his island home. And now he was returning to his poor room, seeing only one pure face in its frame of gold hair, hearing only one voice repeat, like the chords of some heavenly harp, words kind, gentle, proud cold—Lady Elaine Harwood, an earl's daughter!

He had sworn that she should love him in the days to come; but it seemed that her love had come out to him, him the peasant's son, unasked. Oh, the madness and the glory of it! Oh, the triumph of it, if he had won her so! If—ah! there it was. He had thought the aristocratic maiden a type of virginal modesty, such as one sees with veiled eyes and long hair of flowing gold in the paintings of some divine old master, but she had sent to him first a message.

He was enraptured, but with the rapture mingled pain, and that shade of disappointment which mixes itself up with all our human pleasures.

"Yes, I hope she has never sent a message like that to any fellow before," and Roland's heart leaped savagely at the thought.

"If I had a rival," said the youth, "I hope I should never kill him."

He reached the rather dingy street, the somewhat shabby house, the very poor room which was all that London gave him of a home—a room looking on tiles and chimneys and smoke; but on this clear, frosty afternoon the smoke has turned to gold in the dying light, and the sky beyond in the background was gleaming with rose and blue and pale green opal tints. Clouds of fire floated away, taking fantastic shapes.

Roland likened them to cherubs with golden wings. Leaning his elbow on the sill of his poor attic, and looking above the ugliness of the London roofs to the beauty of the sky, he fell into a dreamy and absent mood.

All through his dream the violet eyes of the Lady Elaine shone on him with a mysterious power full of a strange pathos.

Pathos! Why should he pity the proud earl's proud daughter? It was impossible that in her golden existence there should be clouds; that in her bed of roses there should be thorns. As for him, his pillow was full of thorns.

The clouds of poverty, obscurity, and contempt made his life dark and chill as a winter's day.

A gleam of sunshine was rare as the smile of an angel to him. Why should his heart swell with pity for that fair child, Elaine, with her mysterious eyes, her soft voice, her air of pride and repose?

"It is impossible," the lad said to himself. "She is too young and too cold. That woman mistakes. Did she not ask me to become a coachman?"

Roland's dusky face grew white with wrath as he thought of that. He lighted a fire in his narrow grate, and when it blazed up he drew his poor table to the front, and began to prepare a humble meal—bread and tea and a little butter. Before he began to eat he heard a rap on his door.

"Come in!" he cried.

And two men entered. The first was young and pale, with deeply sunken eyes, which gleamed with lurid light, lank black hair, a mouth at times fierce, at times sweet.

His shabby dress bespoke poverty but not neglect. His coarse shirt was clean; his hands, delicate and long, were well-formed; he was an intelligent but very sad face.

The other man was nearly forty, big and blustering, fair, with ruddy cheeks and bushy light whiskers and beard.

His dress was gaudy. He wore a conspicuous blue tie and a heavy silver chain.

"Hallo, my man!" he cried, loudly, to Roland. "Are you composing verses to the tiles, or waiting for the serenade of the cats? They are

musical up here, I should say, after dark. You are high in the world, Roland. Have you a bit of tobacco and a mouthful of whiskey in your cupboard?"

"I think there is some, Mr. O'Flynn," Roland answered.

Then he turned from the window and clasped the hand of the pale youth warmly.

"There will be a meeting to-morrow night at the 'Rose' public-house, in Witcher's Court, Leicester Square. We meet at eight sharp," cried O'Flynn.

Roland's face darkened.

"I cannot come. I have an appointment."

O'Flynn turned sharply round with an oath on his lips.

"Are you getting chicken-hearted?" he asked.

"Do you mean to shirk away just when the clouds are blackest and the danger at the height? Are you fascinated with some of the nursemaids of the aristocrats in the parks? Are you content to grind away in a rascally lawyer's office for fifteen shillings a week? Have you lost your manly ambition? What is the matter with you?"

Roland's dusky beauty showed to more advantage when the rich colour dyed his cheeks. His eyes shone.

"None of these things have happened, Mr. O'Flynn. I am the most discontented wretch on the face of the earth. Please don't annoy me with ridiculous remarks. I really have an appointment to-morrow."

"With a lady?"

"Yes; but not a love affair."

"Ah! that's mysterious. Is it business then?"

"I don't know what it is," Roland answered; "she has something to tell me. She is a sorrowful woman, ten years older than myself, and altogether in a different sphere. Please ask no more questions. I have told as much as I know."

"And the woman's name?"

"I don't know it."

(To be Continued.)

AFTER MANY YEARS.

DEAR wife, how fast the years have passed
Since that bright day of fairest weather,
When, hand in hand, love's sweet command
We vowed we would obey together.

We've had our share of pain and care,
Yet, after all, life has been pleasant;
Our boys and girls with health rejoice
And share alike the hopeful present.

We've house and lands and willing hands
That never were ashamed to labour,
And we've, dear wife, thus far through life
Had the respect of every neighbour.

So on this day let care away.

Let peace and hope have fairest weather,
While we renew, the vow so true
We years ago both took together. C. D.

"JENNIE JUNE" ON FORTUNE TELLING.

It is strange how people cling to the absurd old superstition of fortune-telling, even in this enlightened age. There is not a village throughout England in which you may not find some withered old crone, who has a greasy pack of cards and a dirty tea-cup, from which she bestows fortunes of all kinds in proportion to her fee. For sixpence any farmer's daughter may have "a real nice young man—one that'll set a deal by you. Here he is; you're the queen o' hearts, you know, because you're light complected, and he's the jack o' spades, because he's dark. He's next you, standin' onto his head, he's in such a hurry." For a shilling "a smart

young city chap" may be purchased; and at the rate of two shillings—"I shouldn't wonder if you had the minister," the ultimatum of village hopes and wishes. The queerest part of the thing is that people believe in the old lady's powers implicitly.

You will be told in confidence that she told Mary Jane she'd be married not a week before she met John, and that she predicted Squire Brown's folks would have trouble before the barn was burnt. Even old housekeepers, whose thoughts have long been turned from beaux and weddings, will seek the village witch after dark, to discover where the spoons have gone, or who took the cedar pail off the back porch. When the sybil declares "they was hooked by a young man, and he's hid 'em where you'll never find 'em, not if you look till doomsday," they receive her words as those of an oracle, especially as the spoons are never found, and the cedar pail remains non est.

To know their future destiny appears to be a very desirable thing in most people's eyes, and not only ignorant people, but those of education and refinement, appear to have an idea that a mirror in which coming events might be seen would be a more valuable discovery than the philosopher's stone. Why they should think so, heaven knows. Life is full of misery, and must end in death. I would not lift the curtain, were it in my power, for all the wealth the world could give me. We can bear our sorrows as they steal upon us from the dark; but could we watch their coming, and know the hour of their arrival, the mere anticipation would drive us mad.

REMINDING HIM OF HOME.

THE following is an affecting illustration of the natural longing for what is dearest to us that comes to the heart in the hour of death:

Some years ago a native Greenland came to England.

So he made up his mind to return home, and took passage on a ship that was going that way. He was taken sick, and as he was dying he turned to those who were standing around him, and said:

"Go on deck, and see if you can see ice."

When that man was a baby, the first thing he saw, after his mother, was ice. His house was made of ice; he was cradled in ice; the water that he drank was melted ice. If he ever sat at a table, it was a table of ice.

The mountains were of ice; the fields were of ice; and when he became a man, he had a sleigh and twelve dogs that ran fifty miles a day over ice.

And many a day he stooped over a hole in the ice twenty-four hours, and put his spear in the head of any seal that might come there.

He had always been accustomed to see ice, and he knew that if his companions on the ship could see ice, it would be confidence that he was near home. The thought of ice was the very last thought in his mind.

COFFEE.

As a beverage, coffee is agreeable; but it should not be very strong, or drunk too often, as it is undeniably a stimulant. Take only one cup at the regular meal, and that of a given, unvarying strength. In this way it may be used every day for a lifetime, not only without injury, but with greater advantage than an equal amount of cold water. We have heard of a lady who was for a long time in poor health, to the mystification of several physicians whom she consulted, when at last they discovered that she made a most extravagant use of strong coffee many times a day—in fact, she had a pot of coffee always at hand. Following the advice to abstain from coffee, resulted in an immediate end of all her trouble.



[THE IRONY OF FATE.]

STRONG TEMPTATION: A Tale of Two Sinners.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"That Young Person," "Why She Forsook
Him," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

READING THE WILL.

A wise good man contented to be poor.
CRANBY.

SIR GEORGE had a grand funeral. Cecil Kyrle, who acted in all things as master of Lakewood, had ordered this. The dead man had been widely respected, if little loved, and many flocked to pay the last token of respect to his memory.

A strange and varied throng—one or two Members of Parliament, Vere Eastcourt, whose mother had been the late baronet's sister, all the notables for miles round Lakewood, a dozen poor relations, none of them very near, but all hoping to be remembered in the will.

They claimed kindred with Sir George through their wives. The grand old name of Kyrle was almost extinct, Cecil and his unknown cousin being the last of their race.

All was over. Sir George Yorke Kyrle, of Lakewood, had been left in his last home, and his friends, relations, and servants were assembled in the library to hear the will read.

Mr. Evans, the family lawyer—the very man to whom Cecil Kyrle had been articled—took his seat at the head of the long oaken table. Cecil was next him, with Vere Eastcourt at his side. The political and personal friends, the county neighbours, poor relations, and servants all took their seats.

The poor relations were the most anxious. They strained their eyes by attempting to read their fate in the lawyer's face, while the servants seemed quite easy, for if they had lost one good master they expected to find another in Sir Cecil Kyrle.

Mr. Evans untied the pink tape which secured the will with true professional mystery. He cleared his throat most carefully, and then commenced his task. Of all those present only one guessed what was coming.

It was a very short and simple will. A dreadful thing it would be for solicitors if such became general.

Sir George left a year's wages to every servant in his employ at the time of his death, and annuities to some of the older ones.

To the vicar and village doctor he left handsome mourning rings, and most of his friends had some personal remembrance—Lady Isabel Eastcourt a diamond bracelet, Vere a chesnut mare. He was a keen sportsman.

The poor relations believed now their turn was come. Nothing of the kind.

The will next spoke of the funded property, amounting to upwards of eighty thousand pounds, a small shooting-box in Blankshire, and every article of plate, furniture, and jewellery at Lakewood bought within the last ten years—these were bequeathed to the testator's beloved nephew, Cecil Kyrle.

People were amazed. Surely Mr. Cecil was not to be cut out of Lakewood after all? Yet it seemed like it.

Mr. Evans continued, slowly:

"And all this my real estate of Lakewood, with the annual income of thirty thousand pounds pertaining thereto, with all family heirlooms, plate, jewels, furniture, and effects (excepting those before specified), and my town house in Park Lane, I give and bequeath to my only surviving son, Harold Yorke Kyrle, and his children after him for ever."

Dead silence reigned. Everyone looked at Cecil. Certainly he bore the blow admirably.

"This is a sad thing," said the Earl of Kim-

berton, as he rose to take leave; "title and fortune alike swept from you. I pity you from my heart, Mr. Kyrle."

"I thank you, Lord Kimberton, but I never felt less in need of pity. I am quite contented with my poverty. Five thousand a year would seem a fortune to a great many young men."

"Not when they have been led to look for thirty thousand," said the earl, sharply.

He went home, and told the countess Mr. Kyrle must no longer be made so welcome at The Towers. They must select another husband for their plain, freckled Lavinia.

There was no shade of rancour in Cecil's voice as he asked Mr. Evans:

"Have you any idea where Sir Harold is? I promised my uncle to find him out and bring him home."

"You and I are sole executors," returned Mr. Evans, cordially, "but I've no idea where your cousin is. More than twenty-three years ago he talked of buying a commission, but his name's not in the Army List, and never has been."

Presently the "mourners" had dispersed. Only three persons remained at Lakewood—Cecil Kyrle, his cousin, Vere Eastcourt, and Mr. Evans.

The gentlemen lingered long over their dessert, deep in conversation.

"My mother will be surprised at this," said Vere, thoughtfully. "I have often heard her speak of Harold Kyrle, but she thought he died long before his brother."

"Everyone thought so," returned Mr. Evans. "Sir George encouraged the idea."

"What was Harold Kyrle like?" asked Cecil, abruptly. "Do you remember him, Vere?"

"Not an atom. You forget, Cecil, that I was only six years old at the time of his disappearance."

"Sir Harold is, or rather was, very like you," declared Mr. Evans; "in face, that is, Cecil. He was much more slightly made, and more delicate-looking. Harold Kyrle was not fitted for poverty. His nerves were highly strung,

and he was a great deal too sensitive. Battling with the world may be very good for some young men, but was not for him.

"I shall never forget the last time I saw him. He came to my office to receive the little legacy his godfather had left him. He looked a mere boy, though he was twenty-two.

"This is a sad state of things between you and your father," I said to him.

"Yes, but I can't break my word to please him," returned Harold. "I have disobeyed him, and, as he says, my wife and I must take the consequences."

"His face was thin, and all the veins stood out on his forehead. A good, honourable man, whose word was better than some folk's bond. Harold Kyrle was a great favourite of mine."

"Ah, but this won't find him," cried Cecil, impatiently. "I have promised my uncle to bring Sir Harold back to enjoy his own, but upon my honour it seems no easy task."

"Do you know the year he was married, Mr. Evans?" asked Vere Eastcourt.

"The summer of 1850, and in London. But that won't help you."

"It might. He most likely was married in his wife's parish. If we hunted her family up they might be able to supply the clue."

"You were born for a lawyer, Mr. Eastcourt, but you make one mistake. The person who is now Lady Kyrle had no family. She was the only child of a tobaccoist, who drank himself to death, when Harold Kyrle took pity on her and married her."

"We might find out all the men who bought commissions in 1850," suggested Cecil.

Mr. Evans shook his head.

"The only sensible thing is to advertise for the man himself; but I tell you frankly I think the poor fellow is dead."

"He may have left children," said Cecil.

"Well, I confess," put in Vere, frankly, "I hope he hasn't. It's bad enough to see Cecil turned out for a cousin we have never seen, but it would be ten times worse to see a tobaccoist's grandchildren reigning at Lakewood. Still, I suppose there's no help for it."

"I shall come and spend all my leisure time at The Copse, and be your neighbour," replied Cecil, alluding to the shooting-box left him by Sir George. "I have become such a shockingly bad match I shall never get a wife."

"I wonder who will be mistress of Lakewood."

"The best thing for Lakewood," said Mr. Evans, slowly, "if Harold Kyrle is really dead, would be for his only child to be a daughter. A girl always rises to her circumstances. A man is different."

"Dear old Lakewood," said Cecil Kyrle. "I don't like to think of its passing into unworthy hands."

"We must try and make them worthy," said Vere, simply.

"Well, the hands, worthy or unworthy, have not been found yet," retorted Mr. Evans. "Depend upon it, the only thing is an advertisement."

The younger men yielded to his opinion, and a few days later the following announcement appeared in all the chief London papers:

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD.—WANTED, the marriage certificate of Harold Yorke Kyrle and Ellen Green, who are supposed to have been married in London some time in the summer of 1850. It is believed that Harold Kyrle afterwards entered the army. A further sum of FIFTY POUNDS will be paid to anyone who can tell the present whereabouts of Harold Yorke Kyrle and his wife, or produce satisfactory evidence of his death. Information to be addressed to RICHARD EVANS, Esq., Solicitor, Funn Court, Temple."

CHAPTER VIII.

ONCE AGAIN.

If you had known that I was true
In the days that you still were free!

BRYAN HASTINGS was much annoyed at the strange conclusion of the marriage ceremony.

He hoped his wife was not subject to fainting attacks, they would be a sad drawback to his domestic felicity.

Mrs. Hastings recovered promptly. She was smiling brightly as her husband handed her into the carriage, and throughout the elegant breakfast at Château Thierry she behaved admirably, and played the part of a happy bride to perfection. There was a sweet mixture of dignity and shyness when she looked at her husband.

She answered people's congratulations with such smiling grace, and cut the wedding-cake so artistically, that spectators declared the room seemed a desert when the bride went away to don her travelling dress of grey cashmere, trimmed with velvet. As Rosamond Stuart bent down to fasten Dora's long sealskin mantle Mrs. Hastings kissed her warmly.

"Promise me you will come and stay with me at the Lodge, Rose."

"When the honeymoon is over I shall be delighted, Dora, but you will see me before that. I am going next week to make a long visit to an old schoolfellow who lives close to the Lodge, so I shall be one of your neighbours."

"How nice!"

And then Mr. and Mrs. Hastings set out on the indispensable bridal tour. They went to the South of France and spent a month at Marseilles, Lyons and Toulon, seeing everything there was to be seen. Four short weeks, and yet Dora's eyes were opened. What years of visiting had not taught the Blankshire gentry the young wife learned in a month; her husband cared for no human creature but himself.

He was not unkind to Dorothea when their wishes did not clash. He was perfectly willing she should have her way. He was willing she should have the first place after himself. He treated her with the respect due to his wife, was proud of her grace and beauty, but he did not hide—he did not even try to hide—the truth from her.

All his life long he had gratified every desire as soon as it arose. He had wished for horses, carriages, fine pictures, and a country house. His money had bought them all. His last fancy was a wife.

Dorothea seemed to him a profitable investment and he bought her; of her feelings, her heart, her sympathy, he thought nothing, that was not in the bond; he bought her with jewels, fine clothes, and an easy life, that she might help him to pass time agreeably and entertain his friends pleasantly; all she had to do was to fulfil her part of the bargain as he did his.

When Dorothea discovered this all the respect and gratitude she had felt for Mr. Hastings died at one blow. She despised her husband. Weary of poverty and a lonely, loveless life the poor creature had married a rich man for his money, and already she found her gain unequal to the price she paid for it. Her youth must wear away at this man's side; she must hear all people speak well of him, and alone see behind the veil his real self; she must bear his heavy yoke with a smiling face; must accept his kisses and endearments as a dumb beast receives the caresses of its master.

Bryan Hastings was her lord and master, and already he had made her feel it.

Mr. Hastings on his side was perfectly satisfied; he had never passed a pleasanter month than that of his honeymoon; decidedly a wife was a better companion than a secretary, and marriage, if rightly managed, was an admirable institution.

His wife had married him intending to do her duty. She had gone to the altar with the one hope of blotting out her past and forgetting the wild, passionate love of her youth in a calm, enduring affection for her husband; when she knew him as he was all this changed. Dorothea no longer thought it sin to think of Vere; she gave herself up to dreams of the past, of which he had been the hero.

When Bryan Hastings took his wife to live almost at the gates of Eastcourt she loved its master to the full as passionately as the night when she had promised to be his wife.

To love was part and parcel of this woman's being. Through love anyone could have made her what they pleased. She had loved her father, he died; she loved Vere, he forsook her; she tried to love her husband and found the task beyond her power, then she ceased to struggle with her heart, and let it return to its old allegiance.

"It cannot matter now," was her excuse; "I am divided from him for ever. Nothing in the world could bring us two together; he will never know it. I shall be the only sufferer by loving him."

Dorothea was very glad when they started for England. The first two months she was to pass in Blankshire. The Lodge was only an hour's journey from town, and Mr. Hastings could go up and down when his presence was required at the bank. At Easter she would go to London to be presented, but Easter seemed a long way off.

Mrs. Hastings wondered very much when she was once settled down how she should pass her days. She had heard that women who had been "disappointed" always took up some hobby, but Dora did not think any hobby would drive her from her thoughts; with an empty heart her time might as well be empty too.

Mr. Hastings felt very proud of her as he led her through the long file of obsequious servants to the room he had chosen as her boudoir.

"I hope we may be happy here, Dorothea."

And his wife did not tell him that at his side earth held no happiness for her. She let him kiss her full, red lips, and smiled at him. Alas! was her life already becoming an acted falsehood?

"I shall be obliged to go to London to-day," Mr. Hastings announced at breakfast the next morning; "but I don't think you will have any visitors; people will leave you breathing space after your journey."

He never asked her how she was going to spend her long, weary day. He would only return to dinner in the evening. He never gave her any caution or warning about what was befitting the mistress of the Lodge. To do the man justice he was a gentleman—he trusted his wife.

Later on, when the February sun shone brightly, Dorothea went to get ready for a walk. When she was dressed her maid, a Blankshire girl, proffered a piece of information.

"The park's the prettiest walk, ma'am; through those green gates opposite there's a footpath through to the village."

And Dorothea took the advice and entered the grand old park which was called after the man she loved. Oddly enough, though Mr. Hastings had spoken of most of their neighbours, he had accidentally made no mention of the Eastcourts, and his wife was utterly unprepared to find herself at their very gates. Mrs. Hastings was delighted with the beauty of the park, and wondered a little who was the owner.

"If I had been born to such a place as this should I have been happier?" she asked herself.

Dora hated poverty. She never forgot the sordid misery of the last three years. She often thought of her mother, and wondered dimly if she missed her. Something of this filled her mind now, and if she heard footsteps in the distance she was too much engrossed to notice them. There was nothing to prepare her for what awaited her. Looking up suddenly she saw Vere Eastcourt coming towards her with an eager face. She looked at him, then blushed as she thought of the last time they had stood together.

Never before had she repented so bitterly yielding to temptation as now, when Vere Eastcourt was before her, love beaming in his eyes, and by her own act and deed she had raised up such a barrier between them as death alone could break down.

The days wore on. Fully a month had passed since the reading of Sir George Kyrle's will.

and as yet no reply had come to Mr. Evans' advertisement.

"And my belief is," said the old lawyer to his friend and quondam pupil, Cecil Kyrle, "we never shall have any reply at all. Your cousin's dead, and you're Sir Cecil and master of Lakewood."

"I will never believe it until I have proofs of Harold's death, and that he died childless."

"People are not generally so reluctant to believe their good fortune."

"Lawyers don't usually own to such things, Evans, but I confess I have a strong presentiment that I shall never be master of Lakewood. I don't believe Harold Kyrle is alive himself, but I feel convinced he has left a child behind him—perhaps half a dozen. Who knows?"

It was the day after this conversation that Mr. Evans' head clerk announced that a "person" was waiting who declined to state either name or business, but insisted on seeing the solicitor himself.

"Man or woman, Judd?" was the brief inquiry.

"Woman, sir. Has seen better days, I should say."

"Show her in."

Another moment and the solicitor was face to face with his visitor. Mr. Evans saw a small, plump woman about forty years of age, who might have been pretty in her youth, but now was coarse and too full-blown.

The stranger evidently believed in her own attractions. She was dressed in an absurdly youthful style, had a whole flower-garden in her hat, and her scanty, flaxen hair was curled in faint imitation of ringlets.

Evidently she had firm faith in her own powers of fascination. She smiled in the most smirking fashion, drew a chair close to the fireplace, and seated herself with her toes on the fender before she observed, placidly:

"I never did believe in letter-writing, sir, so I just took the twopenny tram from Camberwell Green to Westminster Bridge, and being a fine morning, walked on, and here I am."

"So I perceive," said the solicitor, drily. "May I ask to what I am indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"It's very kind of you to call it an honour," returned the woman, and taking his words in the most perfect good faith, "and I'm sure I shall find the hundred pounds very useful. Money don't go any way now, and my landlady piles up the extras frightful."

"May I ask you to explain yourself?" losing all patience. "You've made some mistake in coming here, madame."

"Why, this is Pump Court; isn't it?"

"Certainly."

"And you are Mr. Evans? That young man said so."

"The young man is quite correct." The visitor took her purse out of her pocket, and carefully emptied its contents into her lap. Mr. Evans noticed, among other articles, one or two draper's bills, a crumpled postage stamp, some dirty pieces of paper, a tip of dried tongue, a lucky farthing, a thimble, some peppermint lozenges, and about a shilling in coppers.

She fumbled about helplessly among these for some time, finally selected one of the scraps of papers, smoothed it out, and handed it to Mr. Evans, who saw at a glance it was his own oft-repeated advertisement.

"I never take the 'Telegraph,'" said the "person," as Mr. Judd styled her, with her affected simper; "it's so very common. I generally have 'Lloyds' every Sunday, only my landlady she lent me the 'Telegraph' yesterday, and I thought I'd come and see you."

"And you think you have the necessary information? We shall want ample proofs before we pay the reward."

"Harold Yorke Kyrle was married at Emmanuel Church, Camberwell, on the first of August, 1860, and I've got the certificate in my pocket," and, sure enough, out of a dirty envelope she took a piece of crumpled paper.

"Those are my lines, sir. It's more than twenty-three years ago since Harold Kyrle married me, and a good wife I was to him."

"Do you mean you were Harold Kyrle's wife?"

"To be sure I do."

"Good heaven!"

Mr. Evans was not an irreverent man. The exclamation was wrung from him by intense surprise.

He had known the Kyrle family well. Harold had been a special favourite of his. He remembered him as a youth of wonderful refinement and innate gentlemanly feeling. How could he ever have married the woman before the solicitor.

It never occurred to Mr. Evans that twenty-three years might have changed Mrs. Harold Kyrle into a very different person from Miss Ellen Green.

"You need not be surprised," observed the said Ellen. "There was nothing at all odd in his wanting to marry me. There were plenty of others did the same. Mr. Solomans, the hairdresser's young man on the Green, said I was the prettiest girl in Camberwell."

"And that's twenty-three years ago, Mrs. Kyrle?"

"Yes," bridling. "I don't look as if I'd been married twenty-three years, do I?"

"You don't look as if you'd been married twenty-three hours to a gentleman," was the solicitor's private opinion.

Aloud he said, quietly:

"And what about your husband, Mrs. Kyrle? I hope you can give me his present address?"

"He's dead," wiping an imperceptible tear from her faded blue eyes. "He died three years ago at Shorncliffe. If you go down there you can see the grave. I had a stone put up, and paid four pound one for it, which I had hard work to scrape together."

"Dead! Poor Harold!"

Mrs. Harold resented the pity as a personal slight.

"Of course, it was very dreadful me to be left a widow so young, and to have to wear caps—ugly things!—which I did for a whole year. He was out off quite suddenly, but I don't think he minded. Harold never could take life easy. A real Peter Greivous he always was."

"And you never sent to the family at his death?"

"Much they'd have cared. They never forgave him for marrying me. Harold took on about it a great deal, which you know was very stupid, as he had 'me.'"

Mrs. Harold emphasised this pronoun to show she thought herself it was a very precious one.

"Harold's was not a contented mind, and he'd no pride. He wrote over and over again to Sir George, and never had a line in reply."

"Still, you ought to have sent word to Sir George of his son's death."

"Harold made me promise on his death-bed I wouldn't seek out his family. I think he fancied I wasn't good enough for them. He made me swear I'd never call myself Mrs. Kyrle, or tell anyone it was my real name. I was in a mortal fright this morning in the tram, but I couldn't help coming to try for the money. Oh, sir, you don't think his ghost will haunt me, do you?"

"No, of course not," said Mr. Evans, reassuringly. "There are no such things as ghosts, Mrs. Kyrle."

"Don't call me that, please. If I'm called Mrs. Kyrle I shall always be thinking I see Harold's ghost. Besides, I have been called Mrs. Yorke so long I couldn't answer to anything else. It was Harold's name in the regiment, and it's on the stone I paid so much for, too."

"Then you never bore the name of Kyrle? You were always called Yorke?"

"Always. The colonel of the regiment knew who my husband was, but no one else. You can write to Colonel Ellerlie if you like."

"Perhaps I shall. Not that I doubt your word."

"You don't need to," retorted Mrs. Yorke. "I always say what is best, though my poor dear husband did not think me good enough for his family."

Mr. Evans wrote a cheque for fifty pounds, and handed it to Mrs. Yorke. A week before it would have seemed the wealth of Golconda to her. Now she looked at it in scorn.

"You said a hundred pounds," pointing to the advertisement.

The solicitor shook his head.

"I offered a reward of fifty pounds for the marriage certificate of Harold Kyrle, and you have justly gained it. The other fifty was for the proof of his death childless."

Mrs. Yorke sighed.

"It's very hard to have children. They always stand so in one's own light."

Mr. Evans stared. Was this woman actually wishing herself childless for the sake of a mere fifty pounds?

"Your children won't trouble you to support them any longer," he said, coldly. "Your father-in-law is dead, and he has left enough behind him to provide for a dozen grandchildren."

"And me?" put in Mrs. Yorke, anxiously. "Shan't I be provided for, too?"

"I have no doubt your son will behave properly to his mother. May I ask—"

She interrupted him.

"But I haven't got a son. I never had but one child, and that's Dorothea."

"So named after the late Lady Kyrle?"

"I suppose so. It wasn't after me, and the girl herself isn't a bit what my daughter should be. She's as black as night, and as tall as a giant. I'm sure she makes me look quite old," sadly.

"Miss Kyrle resembles her father, perhaps?"

"Yes, she's just as proud. That girl holds herself as high as if she were a duchess."

"Well, perhaps she may be some day. She is a great heiress now. Mrs. Yorke, I must trouble you to come again to my office to-morrow, and to bring your daughter with you."

"I can't," said Mrs. Yorke, regretfully. "At least, I can come myself if you like, but I can't bring Dora."

"Shall I wait upon Miss Kyrle at Kennington?"

"You wouldn't see her."

"Is there anything wrong?" asked Mr. Evans, really alarmed. "Your daughter is not an invalid, is she?"

"She never ailed an hour since she was born, and if she was in England I'd bring her to you if I'd had to drag her to the tramway."

"Let us hope such violence would not be necessary. Where is Miss Kyrle? I must communicate with her at once."

The mother's answer remained unspoken, for Mr. Judd knocked at the door and announced respectfully that Mr. Kyrle was asking to see Mr. Evans.

"Don't move, Mrs. Yorke—don't disturb yourself," said the lawyer, affably. "Show Sir Cecil Kyrle"—with a slight stress on the title—"here, Judd, and don't let us be interrupted."

(To be Continued.)

MUSHROOMS.

MUSHROOMS are very prolific, and are eaten largely in Paris. A French baron cultivated them, in large quantities, in his cellars, his apartments and his attics. He grew them in caves underground made expressly, in long trenches; and for large products he preferred this last method. He grew them on the staircase of his hotel, in his handsomely furnished vestibule, in a boudoir, where elegant jardinières, filled in with plants in full flower, concealed under them precious collections of mushrooms in growth. He grew them in his stables in the form of a gastronomic library, in his offices and kitchens of his hotel, under the tables on which his cooks prepared them for the sauceman. He grew them even in the boots of his cooks.

It was sufficient to intrust to him a broom for him to return it with a magnificent crop of mushrooms in full growth. He asserts that one day a friend doubted the success of the skilful grower of mushrooms, when he bet him that he would grow under the bed of the doubter, and while he slept, a plentiful crop of mushrooms,

and that, too, during a whole season, without any swell, without any inconvenience and without any of those disagreeable effects that one would fear to produce in a well-kept household. All of which goes to prove the extreme facility of generating the mycelium or mushroom spawn, and of its development into mushrooms.

A RUSSIAN HERO;

OR,

Marko Tyre's Treason.

CHAPTER I.

THE great plains of Russia, broken by river and marsh, lay sweltering in their short-lived summer.

The time was the 16th of May, 1778, in the reign of Catherine II.

A score of versts from the capital, on the road to Moscow, were situated the vast estates of Gen. Ignatius Gradowsky, one of the great noblemen of the empire, renowned for their surpassing beauty.

The general himself was no longer there.

Six months previous to the opening scene of our narrative he had mysteriously disappeared, one dark and stormy night, after attending a fashionable party, and was generally supposed to have fallen through an ice-hole into the Neva.

This singular disappearance was considered all the more remarkable because the general's wife, Lady Retta Gradowsky, had vanished from her home and family with like suddenness and strangeness five years before.

What was the secret of those startling disappearances, one so much resembling the other? Nobody knew. No one even pretended to offer a definite guess.

As was natural, however, the second disappearance had deepened the mystery of the first, and both had given rise to many appalling suggestions of murder, robbery, and hatred.

The riches and honours of the long line of Gradowskys were now centred in an only daughter, who lived retired at the old family mansion, in the midst of her serfs, and was seldom seen beyond her own domain.

The name of this heiress was Roda.

She was a noble girl, gifted, brave, and energetic, lovely as sunlight, a splendid musician, a master of French and Latin, skilled in fencing, a fine horsewoman, an excellent shot with pistol or musket, and a diligent student of nearly every form of popular knowledge and science. She was eighteen years of age, lithe and graceful, and yet sinewy and vigorous.

She understood every sort of work carried on upon the estate, and had administered her revenues with such masterly care that she was rapidly becoming as renowned for her capacity and wealth as for her beauty and goodness.

The warm, bright day was nearly at an end when Roda came forth from her books and figures, looking pale and wearied, and directed her steps into one of the long walks by which her gardens were traversed.

She was, of course, a great sufferer from the strange fates which had befallen her parents, and it was only natural that she was always endeavouring to solve the dreadful questions pressing upon her in regard to them.

Who could have wrought such wickedness? What motive could have prompted it? What object could have been subserved by the double tragedy? and in what form had it been accomplished?

Appalling inquiries! Upon this day, as upon every day since her crowning misfortune, the soul of Roda Gradowsky was absorbed in her afflictions, and yet her calm mien, her clear and earnest eyes, her self-possession, all attested that she did not mourn without hope, and that she had schooled herself to bear the burdens thus heavily laid upon her.

She had scarcely seated herself in the lovely rustic bower which occupied the midst of the gardens, when a distinguished-looking man bounded lightly over the hedge at the foot of the alley she was facing, and rapidly drew near her.

At sight of this man Roda started as at sight of a deadly serpent.

"Again that odious creature!" she murmured, with a shudder. "Will he never cease to intrude upon me?"

The new-comer was Colonel Girgas Dal, one of the most prominent of the minor favourites of the empress. He was in active command of a regiment of favourite guards.

His abode had been for years the imperial palaces. He not only stood high in the confidence of the empress, but he was her chosen instrument for many a delicate mission.

His age was believed to be about forty, although he professed to be younger. He was popular in the highest circles of society, as much for his sociable qualities, perhaps, as for his dazzling position.

He was even accounted handsome, after a somewhat sinister type. He was dressed in a showy uniform, and the badges of several enviable orders were displayed upon his broad breast.

Roda nerved herself, as he approached, to meet him with outward civility.

"I was sure the fine weather would call you forth, Miss Gradowsky, exactly as sunshine calls forth the flowers," said Dal, in a carefully modulated voice, as he bowed low before the beautiful girl, "and happening to be passing, I thought I would again take the liberty of calling to pay homage to your matchless loveliness!"

Roda bowed a conventional acknowledgment, indicating a seat opposite her own.

"It is strange, Colonel Dal," she said, with a bright and piquant smile, "how often you 'happen' to be 'passing.' As often as every other day, I think, and yet I reside a score of versts from the capital, your post of duty. You must really permit me to admire the horses you are in the habit of riding."

Colonel Dal laughed admiringly, assuming his most engaging air.

"I plead guilty to having a design in my frequent visits," he declared. "I come here as naturally as a moth seeks a flame. True, you have rejected my offers of marriage repeatedly, but I have not yet ceased to hope, and to-day I have the honour and pleasure of bringing you a message that can hardly fail to strengthen my prayers."

He placed in Roda's hand a letter, bearing the arms of the empire and the seal of the empress. It read as follows:

"THE EMPRESS of all the Russias has too much heart to force the heart of a subject. But she recommends especially the suit of Colonel Girgas Dal to the heiress of the noble house of Gradowsky. "CATHERINE."

This communication was equivalent, in court etiquette, to a command to marry its bearer, and, as such, it naturally created a profound commotion in the soul of our heroine; but she soon displayed a fair equanimity.

"I am sure her majesty will never force me into an unwelcome marriage," she said, in an icy tone of voice. "I am confident, too, Colonel Dal, that your good sense will show you the impropriety of these distressing attentions. I still adhere to all my former declarations, of course. I can never, never be your wife!"

The officer looked as if he could not believe the evidences of his senses.

"What! you will fly directly in the face of her majesty's wishes?" he exclaimed, with ill-concealed anger.

"I will, of course, write to the empress, or tell her personally my reasons," said Roda, "and I have no doubt she will find them sufficient."

"May I ask what those reasons are?"

"I have given you many of them often enough already, sir," replied Roda. "The first of my reasons for rejecting your suit is, that I

do not love you. The others, I think, may well be omitted."

"I daresay I can guess why even the wishes of the great Catherine have no weight with you," sneered Dal, his thoughts taking the jealous turn so natural to a mind of his class. "The coldness you evince for me is probably the counterpoise of the warmth you feel for another."

Roda flushed under his burning gaze.

"I see that I am right," pursued Dal, huskily, after scanning her features. "You love another!"

The fair girl sat silent, growing roseate with every pulsation.

And this was one of those cases where silence is indeed assent.

"If my theory of your conduct is correct, Miss Gradowsky," murmured Dal, as he arose with a saddened and resigned air, "I can only bow to the decrees of destiny, at the same time that they rend my very vitals."

The remark gave our heroine a hope she had never before experienced.

Perhaps there was something good in the man, after all?

Perhaps she could now set at rest for ever the whole vexatious question? Perhaps he would respect her frankness, and become her friend and well-wisher in ceasing to be a suitor?

"Your generous resignation, Colonel Dal," she said, as she also arose, "induces me to place additional confidence in you. Why need I keep from you a fact that is already being whispered in quite a large circle? It is true—as you have suggested—that I love another!"

Only his habits of military education could have preserved to Dal his self-command at that avowal.

"But do not suppose, sir," proceeded Roda, with deep feeling, "that my thoughts are of love and marriage, or even of the ordinary blessings of existence. My thoughts are in the dread abysses which have swallowed up my parents! By what horrible deaths have they been swept from the world? Or in what awful depths of suffering and wrong are they to-day adding to the slow tortures of a dreadful captivity? These are the thoughts which crowd my soul at all hours and in all places, Colonel Dal, and which would make marriage with even the man I love appear a profanation and a mockery!"

The brave, sweet girl had attained to a glorious height of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation. Her clear eyes shone like stars, as if they had explored the utmost depths of human feeling.

Colonel Dal came a step nearer, with a face that was at once a revelation and a puzzle.

"Believe me, Miss Gradowsky," he said, in a voice tremulous with emotion that might easily have passed for sympathy. "I have not been unmindful of your sufferings, nor have I been idle. Perhaps no man in the empire has sought as earnestly as I to solve the mystery of your father's disappearance, and especially your mother's. I will even go a step further," and he bent a curiously keen glance upon our heroine, "and avow that I believe both of your parents to be living, and that they will eventually be restored to you."

"Oh, if it could be so!"

The soul of Roda seemed to be exhaled in that one wild aspiration.

Colonel Dal threw himself upon his knees at her feet, seizing her hand.

"What if it could be so?" he demanded, in a hollow whisper. "Will you marry the man that restores your father to you?"

He hung upon the answer as if life itself were depending upon it!

"No, sir, unless that man should be the one who already has my promise," was the girl's response, as she sought with all the force of her soul to read the features of the man before her, knowing that terrible secrets existed beneath their smooth surface. "In a word, Colonel Dal, not unless that man were Captain Marko Tyre!"

The utterance of that name proved as start-

ling as the explosion of a bomb. The officer started to his feet as if electrified, recoiling several paces and turning deathly pale.

"Captain Marko Tyre!" he repeated.

"Yes, sir," said Roda, "and I have betrothed husband," said Roda, "and I have ventured to name him in the hope that you will become my friend, even as you are Captain Tyre's commanding officer. Sooner or later—and very soon in all probability—you would learn in society who is the man of my choice, and I am sure it is honourable to us both, under the circumstances, that you now and here have the avowal of my preference from my own lips. My betrothal to Captain Tyre is of course subject to her majesty's approval, but the empress has already honoured Captain Tyre so much that we have no doubt of securing the imperial consent to our union."

Colonel Dal was still dumb with the consternation which had taken possession of him.

"I may add, sir, that we do not propose to marry at present," added Roda, with a sigh. "We must first clear up this withering incubus respecting the fate of my parents!"

The evil face of Dal brightened.

"You'll be single a long time, then," was his thought.

For one brief instant longer he seemed undecided as to his course—whether to unbosom his actual sentiments or to conceal them. Then he seized the hand of our heroine, wringing it violently, and retired precipitately to the entrance of the bower.

"I carry away death in my soul, Miss Gradowaky," he exclaimed, sadly, halting and looking back, "but I am glad I came. I not only understand you better, but I admire and love you more. Believe me, you will always have in me a sincere friend and admirer—a brother."

And with this he slipped away rapidly, vanishing as he had come.

Once fairly beyond the girl's gaze, the face of Colonel Girgas Dal underwent a notable change of expression. All the villainess of his nature flamed from it.

"The innocent! to tell me that Captain Tyre is her lover and my rival!" he ejaculated, as he put spurs to his horse. "It will be the easiest thing in the world for me to compass his destruction! I am his superior officer, high in the favour of the empress, cunning, plausible, capable, and untiring—everything demanded by the occasion. And I not only love the girl to madness, but cannot and will not look the future in the face for a moment upon any such basis as seeing her another's. More than that, I need to handle the revenues of her vast estates—and to get hold of them quickly—in order to pay the debts by which I am annoyed and hampered. Let Captain Tyre look well to himself, therefore! Within a week he will have resigned all pretension to the hand of Miss Gradowaky—or he will have been gathered to his fathers!"

(To be Continued.)

IMPROVED EDUCATION.

The reign of cram in primary schooling in America is seriously threatened, and Boston leads the revolt. Henceforth, if success attends the effort, the Boston public school teacher will teach, not simply hear recitations as heretofore; and the pupils will acquire knowledge after the normal method of childhood, by being taught, by seeing and thinking, instead of by the memorising of words from books. Language will be taught by talking—lessons with and about pictures, plants, animals, everyday life and experience. Oral instruction will also be given upon form, colour, measures, animals grouped by habits, vegetables, minerals, hygiene and the human body.

The metric system will be taught from the metric apparatus. No spelling books will be used, the reading books taking their place. In

the grammar grade, grammar, as generally studied, has been abolished with the spelling-book. In the stead of parsing and other technical work, lessons will be given in composition, in the use of capitals, in letter writing and in the arrangement of sentences. Much of the time formerly devoted to geography will be given to natural philosophy and physiology. Oral instruction will be an important feature of all the classes, and in the lowest two it will predominate.

In the lower classes the subject for oral instruction will be natural history, plants from May to November, animals from November to May, trades, occupations, common phenomena, stories, anecdotes, mythology, metals and minerals. In the upper classes, physiology, life in the middle ages, biographical and historical sketches, and experiments in physics.

A HAVEN OF REST.

THE sunny tempered man makes home an earthly paradise. What a blessing is a merry, cheerful wife—one whose spirit is not affected by rainy weather or little disappointments! Such a woman in the darkest hours brightens the house like a little piece of sunshiny weather. The magnetism of her smiles, the electrical brightness of her looks and movements, infect everyone. The children go to school with a sense of something great to be achieved; her husband goes into the world in a conqueror's spirit. No matter how people annoy and worry him all day, far off her presence shines, and he whispers to himself, "At home I shall find rest." So day by day she literally renews his strength and energy; and if you know a man with a beaming face, a kind heart, and a prosperous business, in nine cases out of ten you will find he has a wife of this kind.

A LESSON IN HUMANITY.

THE Japanese are very kind to animals. Professor Morse tells us that a boy is never seen to throw a stone at dog or bird, and crows come into the city of Tokio and lodge on the houses. They pay for their kind treatment, for they act as scavengers, picking up what rice or fish may fall to the ground. In one of the crowded thoroughfares, like that of Broadway, New York, he has seen a dog laying asleep in the middle of the road. No one disturbed him, but carefully turned out from him. He once threw a stone at a dog to see how he would act. The animal rose to his feet to let the stone pass, and looked surprised, and took only the same notice of a second assault—quite different from the way a Christian dog would be likely to act. By the sides of the roads at the foot of hills stone monuments are placed, and have been there for hundreds of years, bearing verses that teach consideration for the dumb beasts. The unregenerate Anglo-Saxon may hear learn a lesson of practical humanity.

GOOD MANNERS AT HOME.

1. Shut every door after you without slamming it.
2. Never stamp, jump or run in the house.
3. Never call to a person upstairs or in the next room; if you wish to speak to them, go quietly where they are.
4. Always speak kindly and politely to the servants, if you would have them do the same to you.
5. When told to do or not to do a thing by either parent, never ask why you should or should not do it.
6. Tell your own faults, but not those of your brothers and sisters.
7. Carefully clean the mud and snow from

your boots and shoes before entering the house.

8. Be prompt at every meal.

9. Never sit down at the table or in the parlour with dirty hands or tumbled hair.

10. Never interrupt any conversation, but wait patiently for your turn to speak.

11. Never reserve your good manners for strangers, but be equally polite at home and abroad.

WONDERFUL.

ACCORDING to the famous inventor, Edison, we are on the eve of a complete revolution in social and economic life. He has taken the electric machine that feeds the electric candle, and so increased its power and multiplied its capacities that he now claims to be able to supply electric light, that is of a brightness out of all measure of comparison with that of gas, by means of insulated wires laid in the ground, sufficient for lighting miles of streets, a whole city, halls, dwellings, and every place where light is needed. The same machine, he says, will supply heat for warming and cooking, and thus do away with the necessity for ordinary fuel. Not only this, it will furnish power by which various kinds of machines may be run and numerous mechanical services be performed.

Nothing could be more startling in the way of an announcement. The public confesses itself bewildered and startled.

LITTLE CHILDREN.

WE think them the poetry of the world—the fresh flowers of our hearths and homes; little conjurers, with their "natural magic," evoking by their spell what delights and enriches all ranks, and equalises the different classes of society.

Often as they bring with them anxieties and care, and live to occasion sorrow and grief, we should get on very badly without them. Only think—if there was never anything anywhere to be seen but great grown-up men and women, how we should long for the sight of a little child!

Every infant comes into the world like a delegated prophet, the harbinger and herald of good tidings, whose office it is "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," and draw "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." A child softens and purifies the heart, warming and melting it by its gentle presence; it enriches the soul by new feelings, and it awakens within it what is favourable in virtue. It is a beam of light, a fountain of love, a teacher whose lessons few can resist.

Infants recall us from much that engenders and encourages selfishness, that freezes the affections, roughens the manners, indurates the heart; they brighten the home, deepen love, invigorate exertion, infuse courage, and vivify and sustain the charities of life.

Two members of the Order of St. John Ambulance Association, Major-General the Marquis Conyngham and Lord Leigh, have sent donations of £10 and £1 towards the expenses of the St. John Ambulance Association. Besides the rapidly-increasing country centres, there are now nearly thirty classes formed in London alone.

THE word "homespun" has entered into Paris fashion phraseology. But no one knows what it means. It is described as an "excellent English tissue, destined for shooting, travelling, and country excursions. It is grey, beige, or red, and is corded; but is soft and supple." Homespun costumes are to be the rage in Paris this winter.

BOUND TO THE TRAWL.

By the Author of "Clytis Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," "Poor Loo," etc.

CHAPTER LI.

MAX DISCOVERS HIS ERROR.

When love's well timed, 'tis not a fault to love;
The strong, the brave, the virtuous, and the wise
Sink in the soft captivity together. ADDISON.

THERE had been no satisfactory reason given for the abrupt manner in which Amy must have left her aunt Fothergill, and though Mrs. Garland had more than once asked about it, and even persisted in dwelling upon the subject when her daughter declined to discuss it, she could get nothing more satisfactory than the information that she and aunt Fothergill had had a quarrel, that she was sick of her fidgets and fancies, and knowing from a letter from Minnie that her mother was in Brussels, she had packed up her boxes and come to her.

By no means satisfied with this account of the matter Mrs. Garland wrote to Mrs. Fothergill, who was sister to her late husband, and asked her why Amy had so suddenly left her protection.

The reply to this letter never reached the hands it was intended for.

Amy, who knew her mother had written, watched for the postman, and in due time possessed herself of the answer, which after reading she carefully tore in small pieces and consigned to the fire, while her face became white with passion, her eyes looked like the eyes of a woman capable of murder, and she hissed vengefully:

"I wish she was dead. I could almost kill her myself; I shall never be safe while she is alive and can write like that."

Of course Mrs. Garland was surprised at receiving no reply from her sister-in-law, particularly as some ten or twenty pounds of the allowance made to Mrs. Fothergill on Amy's account were still due, and she could not help expressing herself plainly on the subject to her half brother.

"Something wrong with the post, no doubt," returned the colonel, carelessly. "I'll write from my club and register it, that will no doubt bring a reply."

And Amy, who heard him, felt her heart sink, for she knew that it would. Also that the letter would be beyond her reach.

"I don't suppose it will be of any use," she thought, "but I'll write to aunt, and beg her not to say anything against me. I haven't a penny of my own, and if my mother and uncle should turn against me what shall I do? And if all goes well perhaps I may yet marry Major Barlow. How I hate the old cat! I'd strangle her if I could, but as I can't do that I must coax and wheedle her. If she does write such a letter to uncle as she did to my mother, I suppose he will come home and tell me that I must leave the house for fear I should infect their morals. Their morals indeed! But this is my only chance of salvation, and if I must eat humble pie, I'll swallow a whole dish full."

Then she began her letter, by stating she was soon about to be married to a man of good position and large income. She dilated on the ruin that would stare her in the face, and the injury that must accrue to her whole family, if such a letter as she frankly confessed she had intercepted, reached her mother or uncle; and then followed an appeal, so abject, so pathetic, so loving, and withal so utterly false, that I spare my readers a reproduction of it, and the epistle was finished with the information that Colonel Chartres was himself about to write.

She posted this a full day before her uncle sent off his letter of inquiry, and though she received no reply to her gushing appeal, the effect of it was evident in the vague and evasive answer which was sent to Colonel Chartres. Many unpleasant remarks were made, but no direct charge was advanced, only, Mrs. Fother-

gill declined to receive her sister-in-law's daughter again upon any terms.

All this was disagreeable; but Amy breathed freely when she heard it, though she professed to be angry and indignant, for she felt that her aunt's silence had in a measure made her her accomplice, and that henceforth for her own sake she must be silent.

She did not write to thank her for this forbearance; the end was gained; no more was to be hoped for, wherefore she reasoned it would be absurd to express a feeling of gratitude which she did not possess.

And Max von Konig: what had become of him? This. After much evasion and hesitation on his part, and of persistence on that of his uncle, an invitation to spend a week at the Willows had been accepted, and the actual date of their arrival fixed.

I am afraid these anticipated guests formed the subject of most of that letter which Minnie Garland was writing to her dearest friend and only confidante, Katie Jessop, for, near the close, were written these words:

"And you must come while they are here, Katie; indeed you must. I wouldn't have Max go away without your seeing him for the world, and perhaps you might help to set matters straight for your poor friend, for I am beginning to feel that my hopes of happiness are getting dreadfully tangled."

This was the sentence that decided Katie to tell her uncle and aunt, who were never willing to spare her, that she must be on the fifteenth of March at the Willows.

To say that her eagerness to get there was not increased by a paragraph in her friend's letter relating to Percy Rossburn, would not be true, but who could blame her for this or feel that her long and faithful love ought not one day to meet its reward.

The first greetings, which Max von Konig dreaded so much, and to which Minnie Garland looked forward with such a palpitating heart, are over, and the party are all assembled in the handsome drawing-room, talking and laughing it is true, but awaiting with some impatience the announcement, momentarily expected, that dinner is served.

It comes at last.

Herr von Guilderstein gave his arm to Mrs. Garland, and Colonel Chartres, thinking no doubt that it would be well to neutralise Amy's talent for mischief by keeping her close to himself, offered her his arm as though she were a guest, and thus Minnie with her brother and Max were left to follow.

There were no other guests this evening, and Von Konig proffered his arm gravely. He was trying to drive this maiden out of his thoughts save as the affianced bride of another, but he must, nevertheless, extend to her all the courtesies of life just as if his heart never swelled with the fond hope of calling her his own, and he walked by her side now, looking as solemn as though he were at a funeral.

So he was, he thought, standing by the grave of his own happiness.

It was not a very noisy party. Von Guilderstein was hungry, and though he admired Mrs. Garland very much, he, for the moment, paid far more attention to the flavour of the fine turbot of which he was then partaking.

The colonel talked a little, and George talked a great deal; Max was unusually silent, and Amy was cross, which effectually kept her from contributing much to the conversation, while poor Minnie felt at once too happy and too miserable to volunteer more than a trivial observation now and then.

Suddenly there was a cry of surprise and alarm, and everyone looked up startled.

"Oh, uncle, my ring is broken; the one you gave me, the row of rubies is gone. What shall I do? Pray excuse me, it may be inside the fender; I remember seeing something bright sparkle among the ashes."

And in another instant she was gone.

Instinctively Max von Konig looked across the table at Amy, but she avoided his eyes, while

something like an expression of shame passed over her countenance.

Could this be the ring that the elder sister had told him was the gift of a lover?

He had noticed it carefully; he knew it was set with three rows of precious stones, and Minnie said the rubies were gone. Come what would, he resolved there and then to rely upon no information received at second-hand, but to learn from Minnie's own lips the truth about this ring, and the lover who was supposed to have given it to her.

While he thus thought Minnie returned with a bright smile of relief, and pleasure upon her face as she said:

"I have found it, uncle; it was inside the drawing-room fender. I must have broken it when I moved the fender to find Amy's thimble." Then to the guests she added: "I hope you will excuse me, but I was so frightened. I value this ring very much; uncle Basil gave it me five years ago, and I have worn it ever since. I suppose it can be mended?" looking at it ruefully.

"Will you permit me to examine it?" asked Max.

The remaining part of the ring was at once withdrawn from her finger, and the whole of it handed to him, while Colonel Chartres said:

"Don't trouble about it, Minnie, it can be mended very easily. I have no doubt Katie's ring has come to grief more than once before now."

"Indeed, uncle, I don't think it has," returned Minnie; "the last time I saw her it was all right, and she said it had never left her finger since you gave it to her."

"You didn't tell her that Percy selected hers, I hope."

"I am afraid I did long ago," with a blush. Then to the guests she explained: "Uncle gave my dearest friend, whom I hope you will see here before you leave us, a ring at the same time that he gave me this. The two were precisely alike, except that there were sapphires in hers and emeralds in mine; we have both of us worn them constantly, and it would be a great grief to either of us to injure or lose them. Do you think it will be difficult to mend, Herr von Konig?"

"Not in the least. It might have been very much more serious," he added, with a sigh of relief.

Amy understood him, though her sister did not, but she persistently avoided looking at him, and when the ladies rose from table she slipped away to her own room, there to vent some of her vexation and shame at the paltry and untruthful part she had played.

"I suppose they'll make it up now, and he'll marry her," she thought, bitterly; "and what excuse can I make? I can't say I even wanted the man myself. Oh! why did I tell that falsehood, and put myself in this humiliating position! I had no earthly inducement to act as I did, except petty spite and jealousy, and now I don't see any way out of the pit I have dug for myself. I wish to heaven I had some friends to go to and stay with. I never knew a woman so constantly unfortunate as I am. I never have anybody to take my part."

While Amy is thus lamenting the probable consequences to herself of her malicious and cruel falsehood, the two other ladies are sitting over the fire talking.

"How well you are looking to-night, mamma," Minnie is saying. "That black silk and lace become you beautifully." "I never saw you look better."

"I was thinking just the same of you, dear," was the reply. "I wish I could say as much for Amy." She makes me look dreadfully old."

Before Minnie could reply the gentlemen came in from the dining-room, and Max made at once for a seat by her side.

"You will forgive me for asking a question that is not meant as an impertinence, won't you?" he asked.

"Certainly. You would not ask anything I could not answer," was the reply.

"This is nothing that you can object to: Was

the ring you broke to-day the same you wore in Belgium when I first met you?"

"Yes, certainly," with widely opened eyes. "I never wore any other ring; indeed I never possessed another," with a frank smile.

"I—I owe you a thousand apologies for my conduct," stammered the young man. "What must you have thought of me, and I, lieber himmel, what I suffered!"

"What is the matter? Toothache?" inquired George Garland, who had just heard the last two or three words.

"No," slowly, and with but ill-repressed annoyance and impatience.

"Well, come and have a cigar, or a game of billiards. Minnie, they want you at the whist table, to make up a rubber. Amy has gone off in the sulks. Come along, Max, there's a jolly fire in the billiard room."

And thus young Garland dragged off his sister's lover just as he was about to confess his passion for her.

An hour later, their game being over, the young men were sitting by the fire smoking, when George suddenly observed:

"Don't take what I'm going to say amiss, Max, but I hope you won't flirt with my sister Minnie; she's a good, tender-hearted little thing, and what other women might take as a jest she perhaps would take to heart and make herself miserable over. Though she's two and twenty she has been like a child among us all, and though I'm a careless, selfish fellow in most things, I'd go a long way to save her any pain."

"You say this because of my conduct in Belgium; it must seem to you mean and dastardly unless you know the cause; but hear me."

George interrupted him, however, by rising to his feet and saying, frankly, but firmly:

"Max, old man, I'm not asking for explanations; I've neither the right nor the desire to do so. You are here as a friend, and I hope you will always remain one. I made a remark about Minnie because I was afraid that you would judge her by her sister, or by most other women whom you have met. Now let us change the subject; I don't know that I had any right to begin it."

"But indeed you had every right, George. I love your sister. I must tell you—"

"I won't listen, to-night at any rate; and I'm not the head of the family while my uncle is alive and with us. What, you won't stop; then I shall go and play whist. I daresay poor Minnie is tired enough of it."

With which George threw away his cigar and returned to the drawing-room.

Time and Katie Jessop had greatly improved this young man, as you can easily perceive. He had grown more manly, less selfish, more thoughtful for others, and he now volunteered to take Minnie's hand, nay, rather pretended that he wanted to do so, and the girl, glad to be relieved, stole away to a distant ottoman.

Here Max found her and somewhat astonished himself by suggesting that she should come and play billiards with him. She acquiesced, for, was he not her mother's guest, and as a natural sequence, was it not her duty to entertain him.

But, though they went into the billiard-room ostensibly to play, truth compels me to whisper that not a cue or a ball was touched by either of them. Indeed Max closed the door behind him directly they had entered the room, and taking both Minnie's hands in his own, said, without preface or circumlocution:

"Dearest, I love you. Have you a heart to give me in return?"

"No, Max; it is given," she replied, with a deep blush, while she trembled with emotion. But he, misunderstanding her, sprang away, exclaiming:

"Ah, then it is true; you love another?"

The answer came low and tremulously:

"No, Max; I love you!"

Then he saw her meaning, and the next instant she was clasped in his arms.

"And you do love me?" he asked, over and over again; "tell me so, dearest; tell me; I can scarcely believe my own happiness."

And she did tell him over and over again, and they might have remained for hours lost in the bliss of their newly-avowed love if Herr von Guilderstein's voice had not been heard as he came out of the drawing-room.

Then, a new phase in his position seemed to strike Max.

Suddenly he remembered that this girl had a right to hear something of his early life, and judge for herself concerning the influence it might have upon her prejudices and feelings before she bound herself by any vow or promise to him, and he said, hastily:

"I have something to tell you, dearest, before you promise to be my wife. I will do so to-morrow. You can trust me till then?"

"For ever, Max."

One hurried embrace, then the door opened, and Colonel Chartres and Herr von Guilderstein, followed by George, entered the room.

"I gave them an opportunity, at any rate," muttered that young gentleman, complacently.

"If they haven't used it, it's their own fault not mine."

A glance at their flushed faces, however, told him that his good offices had not been in vain.

CHAPTER LII.

MAX TELLS HIS STORY.

Do what thou oughtest and come what can.
OLD PROVERB.

"My darling, I told you I had something to impart to you before you pledged yourself to become my wife."

"Yes, you did, Max, but nothing you can tell me will make any difference in my love for you."

"I trust it may not—nay, if I thought it would, I fear I should be coward enough to remain silent; for your love has become all the world to me, Minnie darling."

A pause in which fond lips met, then with the fear of some shadow coming between them, the girl said:

"Is it necessary that you should tell me anything, Max? I believe in you implicitly. I can trust you with my life."

"The very reason, love, why your confidence should be well merited. No, I must tell you all I know of my history; it is as unsatisfactory as a story which breaks off in the middle, more so, indeed, to a certain extent, it is a story without a beginning. But to proceed."

"You are sure I ought to hear it?" pleaded Minnie.

"Quite sure, and it is not so very dreadful after all."

"You know best," and she patiently resigned herself to listen.

"First of all," he began, "I am not a German, and Herr von Guilderstein is not my uncle."

"Ah! what and who are you then?"

"An Englishman, I believe, but of that I am not certain. I never knew my parents; my childhood was far from happy. I was apprenticed to the owner of a fishing smack, a trawler, and I hated my vocation. I was always imagining myself tied to the trawl nets and being dragged along the bottom of the sea, but all this is dim in my memory, and seems like something that happened ages ago, or like a life that I have dreamed of but never lived. One night we were on board the smack and going to sea, when a man, who I knew hated me, sprang upon me in the dark, and when I was off my guard, stabbed me in several places and flung me overboard, no doubt thinking I was dead. Fortunately, or I should not be here to tell the story, I fell into a boat instead of into the water, and either it was loose or carelessly tied, or the sudden weight of my body caused it to break away from its moorings. I cannot say, but from what occurred afterwards I know that it must have drifted out to sea. From loss of blood I was quite unconscious and the boat must have floated about for many hours, while I was exposed to the cold and the danger of

drowning, and at the same time so near death from the wounds I had received that I knew nothing of what happened, and my life seems to date from that event as from a second birth."

"Poor boy," said Minnie, tenderly; "what you must have suffered!"

"No," was the reply: "I was past suffering." Another kiss, of sympathy as well as love this time, then he went on: "It seems that a German trading vessel with a few passengers on board, noticed the apparently empty boat and picked it up to find, to their horror, a youth in an awful condition, for it seems they all thought at first that I had actually bled to death. Fortunately for me, however, there was a clever surgeon on board, who declared that the cold to which I had been exposed had stopped the hemorrhage, and he proceeded at once to close and dress my wounds. How long before I returned to consciousness I can only judge by what others tell me, but it must have been a long time, and when I slowly recovered, it was to find myself in the care of a man to whom I seemed to belong. That man was Herr von Guilderstein."

"I thought so," said Minnie, with a sigh of relief.

"Yes, he told me that I was his nephew, or that I was to be. It seemed that he had gone over to America to take charge of his only nephew who must have been about my own age, and who by the death of both of his parents was left alone in the world with the exception of this uncle who had taken such a long journey to meet him. This Max von König was very delicate in health, the climate of America did not agree with him, and the very day they started for Europe he caught a cold, and his uncle feared he would die. This was not to be his manner of death, however, for in a storm that met them off the coast of Newfoundland, venturing upon deck as he was ordered not to, he was washed overboard, and it seems was not missed till all hope of saving him had fled. Thus it was that picking me up from the sea my uncle, as I call him, determined to adopt me. 'You shall take the name and place of my lost Max,' he said. 'You will wrong no one by so doing. I am the last of my family, and you shall be my heir. That is how I came to possess a foreign name and be a German, Minnie.'

"And is that all?" asked the girl.

"What more would you have? Some people might call me an impostor, though I am far from being one. Still it hurts me to hear people talk of my father and mother, and take me for what I am not, and if it were not for paining my uncle, who is so fond of me, I would relinquish the name to which I really have no right. Now, dearest, you have heard all I have to tell you; in the face of it can you still consent to become my wife?"

For answer she nestled closer to his side and answered "Yes," while his arm clasped her waist, and their hearts beat tumultuously with a mutual sense of perfect happiness.

"I don't think I shall repeat to anyone, not even to uncle Basil, what you have told me," said Minnie, when at last released from her lover's embrace; "it would hardly be fair to Herr von Guilderstein to do so, and really it does not concern anybody besides ourselves."

"That is my own feeling upon the subject, darling, but I leave it entirely to your own discretion and judgment."

Then, after another delicious pause, he asked:

"Why do you call Colonel Chartres 'Uncle Basil?' Is that his Christian name?"

"Yes; rather a pretty one, isn't it?"

"It is odd, though I can't say I admire it. He has no son living, I suppose?"

"No," slowly; "he believes he has one, but he never saw him; it is a strange story. I will tell it to you one day, or perhaps he will do so himself; it is as sad as it is strange," and she shivered.

Sadness and love seem as though from their very nature they ought not to come together, and yet how often they do.



[INTERRUPTED EXPLANATION.]

And not one gleam or suspicion of the truth flashed across the minds of Minnie or of Max. Had Katie Jessop heard the story Max had just related, even without seeing him she might have jumped at a conclusion very near the truth respecting the hero of it.

Or if Colonel Chartres had heard it he might have asked questions, the answers to which must have thrown a strong light upon the past, but no comparison of facts suggested itself to Minnie's mind, and she never even thought of asking the name by which Max had in his early life been known.

Thus the day slipped on. Amy kept her room most of the time, and as Max had refrained from stating his authority for the version of the ring's history which had misled him, she was not so much disgraced in the eyes of her family perhaps as she deserved to be.

Max had had a long interview with his uncle, which must have been satisfactory, because the old gentleman gravely kissed Minnie when next he saw her, and expressed his pleasure at her having bestowed her heart upon his boy, as he often called the young man.

He even offered to ask Mrs. Garland's approval of her daughter's choice, and Max accepted the proffered advocacy with gravity enough while his uncle was present, but it was with a fine peal of laughter directly afterwards, that he imparted the news to his fiancée.

"But what are you so merry about?" asked the girl.

"Haven't you seen it?" was the reply; "why my uncle and your mother will soon be making themselves as disagreeable to other people as you and I are; only old lovers are always worse than young ones."

"Why? You don't mean—?" asked Minnie, her eyes twinkling with fun.

An expressive nod or two of the head, and then both of them laughed long and heartily, though why there should be anything more ridiculous about Von Guilderstein marrying Mrs. Garland than was apparent in Max enter-

ing into the like relationship with Minnie is certainly more than I can say, but the young folks evidently saw abundant cause for merriment in it, though they decorously straightened their faces before they met either of the elders.

The same day, but some hours later, and the family and guests, as on the previous day, were assembled in the drawing-room waiting for dinner, when the door was thrown open and a servant announced:

"Mr. Rossburn."

Max started to his feet, while his face became deadly pale, and he looked at the servant and at the new-comer in astonishment, not unmixed with a little resentment, but when Mrs. Garland rose and said: "Oh, Percy, I am so glad you are come," Max felt he was making himself not only singular but somewhat ridiculous.

As it was Percy stared at him as though he too wondered where he had come from, and he looked from the young man to Colonel Chartres and back again, then, when his name was announced and he thought he was a German, he bowed stiffly, and, taking a seat Max had just vacated at Minnie's side, at once began a low and earnest conversation with her.

From surprise at what after all might only be a coincidence, Max became first angry and then jealous.

"What right," thought Max, "has this man, with his grey hair and youthful face, to come into this house as though it were his home and at once monopolise the girl who belongs to me?"

So he mused as he grew more and more irate, forgetting that he himself was a comparative stranger, and that Percy could not yet be aware of his newly-acquired claim. So he moved away, frowning, and seeing the piano open, sat down to it and began to play.

"Who is that German fellow?" asked Percy, slightly, of Minnie; but without waiting for a reply, he added: "I always hate a man who plays and goes in for music and that kind of thing. He startled me when I first came in. I thought uncle had veritably found his son."

"What a remarkable fancy," returned Minnie, and she tried to pass over what had been said, and drive it away, but again and again it would recur to her mind.

"Thought uncle had found his son."

It could not be possible, and yet—the very story of his early life which Max had told her himself would in many points tally with what she had heard of her lost cousin.

But no, it could not be.

The announcement of dinner at length roused her from these thoughts, and Max rose from the piano and quietly appropriated Minnie's hand just as Percy was about to offer her his arm.

"Impudent German cub," muttered the bar-rister, disdainfully to himself.

"I never thought you were a flirt before," said Max, in a low tone, trying hard to treat the matter as a trifle, and make the observation lightly, yet showing all the time that he was bitterly jealous and mortified.

"Flirt!" repeated Minnie, opening her blue eyes to the fullest extent. "Flirt with Percy Rossburn! Why he has been in love with Katie Jessop ever since we have known her, and he was asking me about her. She is coming this evening. I quite expected she would be here in time for dinner."

But Max had caught hold of something besides her explanation. It was a name, and he said, almost hoarsely:

"Katie Jessop, did you say? Who is she? Where does she come from? Tell me."

"There she is!" exclaimed Minnie, as a well known voice sounded in the entrance hall, and with a hurried: "Don't wait for me," she ran out to meet her friend.

And Max von König! He sat like one stunned! If this Katie Jessop was the one he had known long ago, then the secret of his life would be a secret no longer.

True; but even he does not dream of all that may be revealed.

(To be Continued.)



[A TERRIBLE SUSPICION.]

LADY VIOLET'S VICTIMS.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LITTLE BILL.

My soul hath felt a secret weight,
A warning of impending fate.

Mrs. Mudberry's garrulous remarks were of course delightful to a man whose head ached mercilessly, and who was on the verge of brain-fever. Her insolence too was galling.

"Then you give me notice, said Lionel?"

"Yes, sir, that's it exactly. We couldn't be out of pocket. No one 'll keep us unless we work, and an honest married woman with nine children to come to the St. Pancras Un—"

"Poor Aphra!" said Lionel. "So they don't like the colour of her cloak."

"No, sir, nor her 'air; it's like a haythen Chinese, they say."

"Well, Mrs. Mudberry, we will leave you; it is not improbable I may die if turned out from a sick bed into the streets, but murder is of little consequence compared to your lodgers' comfort."

"Dear me, 'ow you do talk, as if you was addressin' a temperance meetin'. Now I come to look at you, you're very ill. Suppose you 'ave a drop of whiskey in your tea, it's a great joy to the sperrits, and then you ought to go to bed. Excuse me, sir, but would it be a very hard matter to settle our little bill? the water-rate man's just called."

Mrs. Mudberry's weekly bills were now a month overdue. The blood rushed to Lionel's brow; he had never so bitterly felt the want of money.

"Only three pounds sixteen shillings and fourpence-halfpenny, including the milk," said the landlady, who saw him change colour.

"I cannot settle with you to-night, but in a few days you shall be paid, unless Death—our

great creditor—claims me first," said Lionel, drearily.

Yes; better at rest in the grave if he and Lady Constance must be for ever severed!

He threw down a sovereign.

"Take that on account, if you please, and now kindly oblige me with some tea."

Mrs. Mudberry retired, and nearly fell against Aphra, who had now returned.

"Ugh! ye haythen!" cried the landlady. "I thought I'd come across your ugly self, that I did."

Aphra ran to Lionel, threw herself by his side, and said:

"You are ill and weak, my son, what has happened to you? Have you found any trace of Lady Constance? See, here is the note; I have it safe."

The face of the dead man whom she had injured returned to her memory in all its haughty pride and passion; but was not the living, so innocent and so true, bearing a punishment beyond his strength?

Should she own the truth and die herself? Ah! not yet; she loved him. How could she glide into the darkness and leave Lionel alone?

He tore the paper from her in nervous excitement, and placed it in his pocket-book; it would be useful in the future as evidence.

"Yes, mother, I have seen her; held her to my breast; felt her warm breath on my cheek; and failed to release her from woe. Earth holds no greater pang."

Aphra looked at him in her Eastern dreamy way. She half envied him a love perfected in sorrow, in which was neither speck nor mite of falsehood nor betrayal.

"Your arm, Lionel, is broken."

"What is that compared to the heart? My angel is left to the mercy of demons and of ill. What assistance can I give to restore her to liberty? But these letters I have just written may be of some use. Be sure and post them when you next go out. Do you think—look at me well—I shall be a victim to fever?"

Aphra took the letters, and then said, kneeling at his feet:

"Yes, Lionel. I know the signs of old. You must be carefully nursed, and have no excitement or anxiety of any kind. Your hand is clammy and cold, while your eyes burn and your brain throbs."

"They want to turn us out from here, and I feel too ill to move."

"Yes; I thought so," said Aphra, throwing off her cloak; "they insulted me yesterday. I have been patient for your sake, Lionel; but I showed them my knife, and the cowards turned and fled like mice. Come, then, beloved, to our people. They are rough and ready, but true; better than these hard-hearted Christians who drink, and rob, and lie with a text on their lips. Come to the mountains in which their tents are pitched, and where the sky beams like heaven's ceiling, different to the sky here, which we never see save through a mist. I hate this wicked, cruel, beautiful London. You were reared among the wild people, who still have pity to cherish the sick and suffering. Come to them with me. You are one of us."

She spoke in her old impassioned way, her eyes full of tears. Dearer to a gipsy is freedom than wealth; the great heart of mother Nature throbs with clearer meaning, with sweeter truth, for the children that rest on her lap on a tent-covered mountain or umbrageous wood. Aphra was an artist and a poet without knowing it.

"Perhaps not," he said, turning aside, for in her deep, shady eyes he seemed to read the old tale of mystery and care that had roused even his boyish curiosity. "I resemble Sir Hugh Allerton. I believe I am his half brother—the baseborn of Sir Phoenix. Swear the truth to me—he was your betrayer?"

Aphra was no longer rapt and gentle, she was the fierce, untamed gipsy again—lawless, defiant, vengeful. She clasped her hands, and a steely light came to her eyes; their love-lit tenderness was quenched in anger and fear.

"I swear you are not Sir Phoenix Allerton's

illegitimate son. Some day I will reveal the truth. Not now—not now!”

She swung herself to and fro, and almost twined herself in a serpent-like form about his neck. She beheld him again her little Lionel—the infant she had stolen, cherished, adored—the brave boy whose daring she had gloried in, and whom she had educated at so great a sacrifice to herself of labour, comfort and rest. The young man who was so loyal and kind—a son to her in his thoughtfulness and care, and now he was on the verge of discovering her guilt. His lips had almost pronounced the truth, and then would she be hated, scorned, rejected!

“So we are cast adrift,” she said, after a pause, “and you are ill; you suffer—you, my son, whom I love. I cannot gain money as I used; the great painters look indifferently at me; my grace and beauty have gone, for I am old.”

Lionel took her hand and held it kindly.

“Dearest mother, faithful friend, the truest and best, let us cling together, to each other to the last.”

“Yes,” said Aphra; “and save your wife, that is your first duty now.”

“Your ten, sir,” said the landlady, opening the door, “and the little bill.”

Aphra seized the paper and read it hastily.

“We will pay her to-night, Lionel. I will sell the anchor, similar to the one I gave your bride.”

She trembled as she spoke. It was the last gift of Lionel's father, and prized accordingly.

Lionel took the anchor and regarded it steadily. Suddenly he shook her from him, and dropped the anchor with a terrible cry.

“Good heavens! Here are the Allerton arms!” cried Lionel, “carved beneath the leaves, and you have spoken falsely to me. I am his son!”

Aphra sank at his feet.

“I have not spoken falsely to you,” she repeated. “What I have told you is the truth. I declare you are not Sir Phoenix Allerton's illegitimate son.”

Ever lit up Lionel's expression into one of wilder glow, and intensified his imagination's power.

“But how if I should be his legitimate child and heir, and you know it?”

Aphra, now seeing her danger, laughed jolly.

“The fever in your blood plays strange tricks with your fancy, Lionel. There are other members of the Allerton family who are profligates and false!”

“At last,” he said, sighing, “I have found a clue to my dead father's history. The anchor shall be preserved, it shall not be sold. I will retain it as a curiosity, an heirloom. Who knows, I may be a wandering heir with some fond parent waiting to claim me.” And he laughed bitterly.

“Your mind begins to wander,” she said in a pained tone.

“Oh, father,” muttered Lionel, “you have left me a heavy burden, a cruel heritage. You have blighted two lives. You have visited a doom on your innocent child that may prove his destruction.”

“Hush, Lionel, my darling!” cried Aphra, her tears falling. “I will never forsake thee. Oh, pardon, pardon!”

She uttered these words in her agony as Lionel fainted away from sheer exhaustion and loss of blood.

“The sins of the fathers shall be visited on their children.”

She often thought of the passage. She thought of it now with a deadlier ache than usual.

Aphra secreted the anchor in her breast, and then gently laid him down, placing a pillow under his head. Poor, friendless and forsaken, what would become of them?

Lionel soon recovered consciousness, but after he had taken the tea and retired to rest, symptoms of brain-fever appeared, and before morning he was delirious.

CHAPTER XXI.

MAD INDEED.

He quits the grate, he turns the key;
He quits the grate, I kneels in vain;
His glimmering lamp still, still I see,
And all is gloom again.

WHEN Dr. Moseley had sufficiently recovered from the shock he had sustained after his interview with the supposed Sir Hugh Allerton, he sat down in his library and commenced a letter to the Earl of Harrington, which for utter villany and heartlessness could not well be equalled.

Tessa, trembling, crept to her husband's side, watching his expression like a thoughtful monkey. Suppose Ebenezer again attacked her, or threw a light came chair at her head? But Ebenezer seemed in no blistering mood; the grip of Lionel Hargrave's strong hand was still about his neck, and a rough blow on his left arm made him feel bruised and shaken.

“You suffer, my Ebenezer,” said Tessa, almost in tears. “The monster—the wretch—to dare to come here and carry off his wife!”

“He will not try it a second time,” said the doctor, quietly. “When he pays us a second visit, my dear, he shall find his wife in her coffin, to all appearances dead.”

“Ah!” screamed Tessa, “you mean to kill her, then?”

“No, make her mad indeed.”

He always spoke openly before Tessa, reflecting that should he ever be taken up for any crime, the law was at present so constituted, a wife could give no evidence against her husband.

“Terrible, Ebenezer! terrible!”

The doctor laughed and stroked his beard.

“Already she is delicious from exhaustion and fright, so we will leave her alone a few more hours, and then I remove her from that comfortable room to a dark cell, where no light can penetrate, and no voice is ever heard. ‘Pon my soul,’ starting to his feet, ‘I half suspect Jennings is a traitor.’”

“The dwarf?” cried Tessa. “No, no, I'm quite sure not. If you did only see the beautiful cart he gave the children.”

“Ugh! you've only one sentiment, and that is maternity,” sneered the doctor. “You'd let those blessed kids cut me up alive, and pick my bones.”

“Speak Italian!” supplicated Tessa, who believed he referred to some historic cannibal.

“Hold your tongue, madame, and leave me in peace, will you, or I’ll—”

“Ah! yes, Ebenezer, I fly—I run.”

And so she did, followed by a boot-jack.

“Rid of that idiot, I can better arrange my plans,” he muttered, gnawing his penholder, “I’m in a deuce of a scrape. Well, well! her intellect must be deranged. I must slowly destroy it, and ‘tis a pity, for, gad! she’s a lovely creature. I had really taken quite a fancy to my sweet patient. How nicely she sipped the maraschino to be sure, and how hard she tried to please me, so that I should spare her, but the husband means to make it hot for me. I saw it in his eyes—a desperate fellow. How he fought for her to be sure, and hang me, if I can understand how ever he escaped from the place.”

Moseley took a few hurried steps across the room, and then sat down, like a nineteenth century Richard III. harassed by a very bad dream.

“I am haunted by the thought of visitors from the Commissioners of Lunacy, before she’s quite insane enough to make it safe for me! It will most likely just take a week from to-day to drive her mad—hunger, cruelty, despair, shall do it, and then let them come and welcome.”

He looked so wicked and so malicious as he muttered this, again drawing writing materials to his side, that the dwarf, who had playfully got inside the large cellarette, in the recesses of which Moseley kept some splendid wines, peeped at him from under the lid, which was never quite closed, as if he saw a large leech drop off a human body, gorged with blood.

“Have I let myself be bewitched by the fascinations of the earl's daughter? Do I love this Lady Constance? Ah! and it isn't the first lunatic by a great many I've taken the deepest interest in. I could almost find it in my heart to run away with her and abandon my swarthy Tessa. She's fair as Desdemona. How the lovely colour rushes to her throat and brow. There is after all something in me; but it's evident she's infatuated with this Lionel Hargrave; is ready to die for him, and all the rest of it. Strange, how blind women are to their self-interest in these little matters.”

His cold but vulgarly sensual nature was evidently not to be changed by time.

The dwarf here knocked against a bottle of port so loudly as to startle the doctor. He thought perhaps Tessa's Angora cat had got into the coal-scuttle.

“What's that?” he cried, jumping up and peeping about. Were his nerves shaken that his hands trembled? But there was no answer; only a loud and prolonged snore. “Someone's asleep,” said Moseley, but glancing on all-sides he could discover no sign of any living presence. “I must surely have fancied I heard something,” he muttered, returning to his seat.

He then opened his desk and commenced his letter to the Earl of Harrington. Moseley was not above laying black mail when the due time came, always, of course, in a smiling, pleasant way. In fact he was so plausible and amusing, it seemed almost a pleasure to pay the charming fellow anything in reason, and out of reason too sometimes; he seldom met with resistance in his demands. And now a very pretty gold mine had opened; still, with the Commissioners of Lunacy constantly figuring before him in his dreams, it was as well to keep on the safe side.

He breathed anything but a blessing on Lionel Hargrave, and perhaps anathemas were the only things he ever bestowed on any, without payment. His letter to the Earl of Harrington ran thus:

“MY LORD—

“Your lordship will be, I am sure, deeply grieved to hear of the serious and nearly fatal disturbance it has been my misfortune to endure on account of your lordship's daughter, the Lady Constance. Her husband, Lionel Hargrave, assuming the manners, and, I must candidly admit, the appearance of Sir Hugh Allerton, forced an entrance into my house, attacked us most unmercifully, brought fire-arms, and wounded me dangerously in the arm. I think the modest claim of one thousand pounds will about compensate me for the wicked aspersions cast on my character and position (both of the highest) and for the loss of my professional time, which, I need hardly say, represents my daily bread.

“After an heroic defence on my part Lionel Hargrave was forced to retire, although he succeeded in dragging the Lady Constance down one flight of stairs, and the consequences to her have been most serious, for she now appears to give every symptom of acute mania, so we deem it more prudent to remove her to what we call ‘our hospital,’ a small farmhouse in the beautifully-wooded county of Trent.

“We fear her life cannot long be spared; her past mental distress has evidently affected her beyond all cure. I therefore write to inform your lordship that should your lordship wish to see this erring but suffering child, you will find her located at our hospital. Beautiful grounds, delicious scenery, the purest milk and best of food, fresh air and untiring attention will, we trust, restore her reason and prolong her young and, let us hope, valuable life: but if not then must we say with the poet—

Whom the Gods love die young.

“Her address will be—

Lady Constance,

Care of Doctor Moseley,

Felton Hall,

St. Swithin's,

Kent.

“I am, your lordship's obedient servant,

EBENEZER MOSELEY.”

This elegant composition took the doctor a considerable time, for every word had to be weighed. This was no ordinary affectionate father, broken-hearted at his daughter's illness, but a worldly tyrant (whose pride conquered every other sentiment), led by the imperious Lady Violet. Why should he, Moseley, spare them, or be shattered by a landscape gardener's violence without exacting compensation from them?

Ever since his debut in science at the chemist's shop had his Creole instincts led him along a glorious career of guineas. In fact one might have almost said he spoke with guineas for commas and bank-notes for full stops.

He now fancied a few glasses of his favourite old port would be of service; he felt chilly and unsettled, so he went to the cellar and opened it, but instead of a glass stopper he felt a tuft of human hair.

"Jennings!" cried the doctor, shaking him so as to arouse him. Then to himself: "Wine, alas, brought him to the pass he is now in, and to wine he seems instinctively to turn, even in his slumbers. Hullo! my man, wake up. Of course you've been tipping a bit on the sly. You half-witted creatures are like children; leave you alone, you always get into mischief. Why the very hair of your head seems soaked in whiskey."

Jennings started from apparently sound slumber, and the doctor picked him from the decanters something like the Russian giant handled General Tom Thumb.

"Where am I?" asked the dwarf, rubbing his eyes.

His mind was filled with designs of baffling Moseley even yet. He remembered the agonised meeting of Lionel and Lady Constance. Now he prayed she might have escaped with her husband. He had listened to her sobs and cries—her bitter sufferings—her poetic despair. Jennings' heart swelled with pity and indignation. He must endeavour to send Lionel news of his bride-elect before it was too late.

"Go out of my sight," said the doctor, wrathfully. "Mind, if I catch you out in any knavery I will shut you up again. Never come near me when I am writing, for if you are troublesome you shall no longer enjoy your liberty. Remember I can punish treachery like a king, by imprisonment for life."

This threat was in itself so terrible Jennings whispered miserably. Fear too affected his imperfect organisation, for the wretched little man had been really suffering from an innocent monomania (if we except his adoration of the widow) when he was sent to Moseley—namely, that of believing he was temporarily converted into a sewing-machine, for the everlasting service of mankind. He had invented several valuable patents; in fact, had overworked his brain before his friends saw the necessity of his incarceration here; they profited considerably by the transaction, his income being an unusually large one.

In all points but the sewing-machine delusion and the attempt to discover perpetual motion his faculties were sound. This unfortunate mania suddenly re-asserted itself. He began twisting himself round and round like a wheel or whipping-top; he seized innocent reels of cotton and wound them round his body; he moved his feet about as if they were on the pedals of an organ; all to Moseley's intense amusement, for anything more comical could not well be imagined. Whether the fumes arising from an unopened bottle of whiskey had to do it, was difficult to say.

Moseley took out a strong piece of rope from his pocket and hit him smartly over the shoulders. The stony-hearted villain was tired of the fun. Jennings grined, and howled piteously. He was working for a penny a yard on his holiday, he said, would the doctor let him finish the curtain and forgive him, this time? A second and heavier blow with the rope made him uncoil the cotton and fly at Moseley, who tied both his small hands together, and still striking him at intervals, bore him bravely from the room.

Outside they were met by the urbane Charles,

carrying, as usual, a washing basket on his shoulder, followed by one of the attendants.

"Law! sir! how Providence must laugh at their pranks sometimes, to be sure. Mr. Charles, he's been a coverin' himself all over with blue, and then tried to hang himself with a pair of silk stockings."

"Poor souls! poor souls!" said Moseley, like a reformed cracksmian addressing his lost brethren, lifting one hand, but tightly securing the rope with the other. Jennings, struggling wildly with the rope, looking like a pigmy specimen of one of the Davenport Brothers, nodded sympathetically at Charles, who put down his basket.

"The question is, sir, I often think, where are their souls? and I reckon that must puzzle many a philosopher too."

"Hush! Jacob, hush! do not seek to understand the inconceivable, or ask impious questions; let us rather seek to relieve the sufferings of our afflicted fellow-creatures; let us mitigate their sorrows and dry up the mourners' falling tears."

"Oh! the hypocrite!" muttered Jennings, who was fast coming to his senses, and forgot his abnormal tendencies.

He found an inch of red flesh rising awkwardly under the rope. The doctor looked at the dwarf he had beaten, and the dwarf looked ruefully at his wrists.

"Then you was at your tricks agin, was ye?" said Jacob, scowling at Jennings; "a makin' curtains at a penny a yard on yer holiday. You want being taken off your keep, that's wot you want."

"Yes," said the doctor, laughing something like a miniature Pluto; "we must reduce his diet, or Jennings will be growing insolent. Go, sir, to your room, and remain there till I have prescribed for you."

He then undid the rope, and showing Jennings the tip of his cane, and the toe of one of his patent leather's, the miserable little man fled like Actean pursued by wolves, or a victim escaping from the fangs of Belisarius.

"You have obeyed my orders, Jacob?" said the doctor, "and removed Lady Constance to the dark cell?"

"I have, sir, and she fainted dead away."

"She is, of course, there now, Jacob?"

"Yes, sir, and quiet as a lamb, I believe."

"It always tames them; give me a lantern, Jacob, for after a visit to number fourteen, I intend to examine her myself."

The dwarf hurried along the corridor till he came to a flight of stairs; he descended these rapidly and soon came to the door of the dark cell in which Lady Constance was confined. How could she be saved? By what means could she be preserved from all the torments awaiting her?

So young, so lovely, so innocent, and so true! Alas! was it possible all her bright youth must be poisoned thus? And then to emerge years hence from this living grave; her heart broken; her hair whitened with anguish; her beauty wrecked and wasted.

He had before seen beings fair as her slowly destroyed through the very sweetness and tenderness of their natures. One hope alone remained—that the commissioners would appear and protest against her incarceration. Justice might arrive with winged speed and smite the demon who had defeated her so long. But having overheard the doctor's threat of really driving her mad, he trembled lest the cruelty of a few days would do all the mischief.

He tapped at the door of the cell twice very softly, fearing lest he should be detected by any of the assistants.

"Lady Constance!"

There was no reply; the wind only shook the ivy rustling on the outside wall of the grating—shook it till it sighed in responsive wails, and the scream of a stately peacock, pluming himself on the lawn, was all the sound heard.

"Dear Lady Constance, try and speak to me. I may be able to save you. You shall send a note to your husband."

Blessed human kindness that can pierce the darkness of despair and death! He fancied she

seemed now to struggle again for breath, and then a low moan reached his ears.

"Lionel," she muttered, "why are you so long absent from me? If you love me, tell me so, beloved, before the sorrows of age approach us. Kiss my hair before the silver threads appear, and my eyes ere the light fades from them. We will go away, Lionel, and live for each other in some sunny home beyond the sea. Here it is cold, icy cold, like the waters of the lake, but near your heart is warmth and peace."

"Poor child, how she dreams of him," sighed the dwarf, tapping again.

"Oh! give me light!" she screamed, throwing herself down by the door, "a little light, for pity's sake. It is darkness, thick, blinding, terrible night; worse a thousand times than famine, grief, or madness, is darkness."

She now began to grope from stone to stone, beating the walls with her tender, bleeding hands.

"Try and touch the keyhole of the door," said the dwarf. "I will strike a match; now there is light; do you not see it?"

"Yes! yes!" she cried, "but the fiends are waiting for me. Sophia Meredith is here smiling at me, and my father and sister listen to her. She speaks to Lionel, and he turns from her. Take me away to my husband, to my cottage, to our dear home. I will make wreaths of the young primroses and violets. They are sweeter than all the flowers my wealth can buy. Away from England, and cold grandeur and heartless pomp, we shall be happy. But why, great Heaven, do you blind my eyes; have they not wept enough? Take me away with you, love. I bless you! I adore you! I kiss you ere I die!"

"Alas!" said Jennings, "she is again delirious, but care and kindness would soon restore her. Moseley has calculated this time too well. I can explain nothing to her. What drugs has he employed to distract her poor brain?"

"Light! light!" she moaned.

The dwarf struck another match.

"I know you! You are kind to me. You are the dwarf; but where is Lionel? He held me to his breast; it is my wedding day. Give me my ring and the wreath and the ring for Lionel. But why do they strew these flowers in the darkness?"

"Mad, indeed!" sighed the dwarf. "Nothing can now be done for her."

He heard a heavy fall, a shuddering sob, and, believing she was now insensible, he thought it best to retire, for he fancied he heard Dr. Moseley's step in the distance.

In fact, he had only just time to hide himself in a cupboard in which brooms and brushes were kept ere Moseley appeared.

"You have ordered the carriage for five this evening to take our interesting patient to the station?" said Moseley to Jacob, who regarded him thoughtfully.

"Yes, sir, as you directed. Then she's very bad, sir."

"Violent, Jacob, very, and I fancy some sort of fever will soon declare itself, so it will be safer to remove her to our hospital—my pretty pastoral farm in Kent. You may retire, Jacob, as I am now going to visit her, but keep near in case you are wanted."

He then took out a key and unfastened the door, nearly stumbling over the prostrate form of his victim.

"She has exhausted her frenzy," he said, looking at the poor bruised hands clenched above her head.

Her long, unbound hair streamed in cloud-like splendour around her, and she had torn open her dress at the throat, neck, and arms, so that the exquisite whiteness of the snowy skin and bust stood out in strong contrast to the griminess of the cell.

Aphra's wedding gift, the small gold anchor, was still suspended on a fine gold chain round her neck. No one had thought of removing it. The doctor first pushed it aside carelessly, and then turned the light of the lantern on to it to examine it closer.

The initials "P. A." and a crest faintly carved

under one of the leaves arrested his attention; but he thought no more of it than he would in regarding any ordinary piece of jewellery worn by his patients.

Some day this anchor might bear fatal testimony to a crime!

Moseley regarded his work for a moment in silence. Her youth, her loveliness, her birth and wealth—all had been powerless in saving her from the powers of evil.

"Jacob!" he cried, "I want your assistance. Fetch me some brandy at once; she seems half suffocated. Then we must carry her to her room. The action of the heart is feeble."

At this juncture Jennings re-appeared.

"What, you imp of mischief! Still in the way," said Moseley, lightly. "Behold this unfortunate girl. Note the ravages of disease—that clenched hand—this foam about lips that should only open to utter words of love and kindness."

"He has at last driven her mad," sighed the dwarf, as Jacob's rambling steps were heard along the passage.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," said Jacob, "I forgot to tell you two gentlemen called this morning and wanted to see you very particular. I said you was out, which you was, and they told me they'd call ag'in."

"What were they like, Jacob? Inspectors, or what? Or friends of the patients?"

"I rather think, sir, they was the Commissioners of Lunacy. They'd a letter from Lionel Hargrave. They asked very strange questions, and one lifted his glass at me as if he saw a vision."

The doctor dropped his lantern. The half-witted dwarf detected some expression on his face that puzzled but delighted him.

"He was afraid of Lionel Hargrave's strong arm yesterday, and of the power he can use," he muttered, as he turned away, "but he fears these others most."

(To be Continued.)

A SUGGESTION.

MUSIC has become almost a necessary part of a young lady's education, and parents expect their children to learn to play the piano, no matter whether they have any taste for it or not. Even before their little hands can stretch an octave, they are placed under the care of a music teacher. Instead of knowing something of music as an art, and being capable of selecting a competent person, the parents too often select some shambling drummer, who can thump loudly and rapidly, and thus deceive the uncultivated ear.

The teacher does not know how to use her own fingers properly, and so cannot instruct her pupil to do so. The consequence is, the poor child makes the hardest work imaginable of it, and the tiny hands and arms ache so painfully that it becomes a penance to approach the piano. Now follows the strife of parent and child about practising, the very name of which makes many a child wince as though it had received a blow.

A few months pass, and the teacher triumphantly exhibits her pupil's attainments by having it play a little waltz. Of course it is very clumsily performed, but the indulgent mamma says, apologetically:

"She is only a beginner, you know; she does very nicely," and she believes what she says. But she will never be a pianist. She may, perhaps, learn some brilliant pieces, in her way, in time, but she will never be able to do the simplest one justice, for her playing is much like the speech of a stammerer.

And yet it is no unusual thing to hear players who cannot execute a dozen bars evenly attempt to entertain judges of music by their performances. It would be equally absurd to hear an Englishman recite something in a foreign language without being able to understand a single sentence of it. How delighted the author would be to hear his most brilliant

passages delivered in a monotonous tone of voice; and how entertained an educated person would be to listen to it! Yet this is a parallel case with the one who has no taste for music and cannot interpret the sense of the composer, but persists in murdering the finest productions of music.

Music has a soul, and rendered without that soul it is lifeless and cold. Though wordless, no language can so easily reach the inmost recesses of our hearts. To be able to bring forth the ideas of the noble in thrilling harmony, to put our fingers on their very heart-strings and feel them quiver with the throbbings of a mighty genius, is a happy gift. When we learn to bring forth the depth of feeling embedded in exquisite harmony, we gather the very essence of the composer's being. His spiritual nature finds utterance without the formality of language, and appeals directly to our higher nature. Yet to arrive at this degree of culture, we need first a taste for the art, patience and careful practice, wearisome hours spent over humdrum etudes, and a gradual progress to the good things in store for us.

A child is not expected to appreciate Shakespeare or Milton, neither can it feel the power of Beethoven's sublime sonatas which stir a musical soul to its depths; nor Chopin's waltzes, which send the blood tingling through the veins and excite the liveliest sensations of pleasure. We must not expect, then, too much from beginners, but we have a right to expect parents who have children to be instructed in music to have some respect for the sensitive ears of the community, and engage competent teachers who will lay the right foundation. It is quite as necessary to have good music as pure literature, for music has a language which appeals directly to the young heart.

We thank kind nature for her fine sensibilities, and shall emulate her in giving all honour to music—the art divine.

THE BARONESS OF THE ISLES.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD Eldred was prompt to meet the emergency that had arisen.

The night was dark, and the king's officers had not yet noticed that the farmer was up and that visitors were in the yard.

As quick as a flash, old Eldred withdrew into the house.

The new-comers rode up, dismounted, and beat loudly upon the massive door, which was now closed and barred.

They called in stentorian voices upon his name, muttering oaths at his supposed sleepiness and stupidity.

It was several minutes before a stir was heard within, and several more minutes before the bars and bolts of the door were unfastened, and old Eldred, rubbing his eyes, appeared on the threshold with a lighted torch.

And by this time, as the farmer expected, the fugitives had disappeared.

They had taken advantage of the darkness, Eldred's delay, and the noise made by their enemies, to beat a hasty and silent retreat to the protection of a group of trees, at a little distance.

But they did not pause here.

Hand in hand, they sped onwards through the darkness, not knowing whither they went, anxious only to increase the distance between them and the farmhouse.

They halted only when Matilda's steps grew uncertain, and she began to pant for breath.

Then they looked back.

There were no sounds of pursuit.

"We have made a narrow escape," faltered Matilda. "I thought for a moment that our capture was certain."

"They should not have taken us without a

struggle," said Ivar. "But our escape from Man is cut off. What are we to do? Where are we to go? Shall I not take you back to the cavern and leave you there while I look for a boat?"

"No," replied Matilda, who had regained her strength and calmness. "I know of another refuge, not upon the coast, and therefore not likely to be molested by our enemies. An old servant of my father, his trusty henchman in many battles, lives upon a farm on the Snafield. He would die for me. We will seek asylum in his house, and he shall find a boat for us and assist our escape. I know the way well."

"Is the journey long?" asked Ivar. "Shall I not procure horses?"

"It will be better to walk. We dare not return to Eldred's for horses, and it would not be well to visit any other of the tenants," answered Matilda.

In accordance with the maiden's wish they pressed onward on foot.

The way led for a couple of miles along the high road, and then turned into a rude cart-path that led to the mountains.

For hours they toiled on in the gloom over hills and hollows, stones and rustic bridges, occasionally halting to rest.

Towards morning a drizzling rain began to fall.

The Lady Matilda had brought an extra wrap in the shape of a long woollen cloak with a hood, made of stuff that defied the rain, and she put this on.

Her dressing-woman was similarly equipped. Their boots were thick, and the change of weather brought little inconvenience to them.

It was just before the dawn, when the darkness lay thickest on the mountain, and a keen chill had begun to pervade the heavy mist, that the fugitives reached their destination.

"We will be careful to arouse only Magroff," said Matilda, as weary and footsore they entered the great farmyard. "We will go to his front door. The servants sleep far in the rear. This way."

She led the way to the porch, and Ivar knocked loudly upon the door.

The summons had to be repeated many times before it elicited a response.

But at last the sound of steps was heard within, the clanking of armour, the murmur of voices.

"Who is there?" then demanded a gruff, hoarse voice, which Matilda recognised as that of Magroff.

"It is I," replied the girl, in her clear, shrill tones—"the Lady Matilda, daughter of Godred!"

The door was hastily unfastened, and Magroff, light in hand, stood revealed upon the threshold.

He was a hoary old man with a warlike aspect, with long, white hair and fierce black eyes, with a stalwart figure and long, brawny arms—a man whose aspect in battle would be likely to strike terror to the hearts of his opponents, but who now, at sight of the pale and weary girl claiming asylum in his house, was all gentleness and devotion.

"Is it Godred's daughter?" he ejaculated, scarcely able to realise the fact. "And here? At this hour? Without a train of attendants? What has happened?"

He peered out into the surrounding darkness as if in quest of some solution to the mystery.

"I am a fugitive, Magroff," said the Lady Matilda. "This is the young knight Ivar, of whom you have often heard. And this is my dressing-woman, my old nurse, Mary, sister of Eldred. Will you give us shelter?"

The old mountaineer started back, as unable to recover from his first amazement.

"The Lady Matilda!" he cried. "Godred's daughter a fugitive? Pardon me, my lady. I can hardly persuade myself that I am not dreaming. A fugitive! Come into my house. All that I have and am is at your service. A fugitive! Odzounds! But this is a strange story. I cannot understand."

He flung open the door wide and the fugitives entered the house.

They found themselves in a wide, long hall, with a stone floor and wainscoted walls, furnished with rude oaken chairs and settles. Matilda sank down upon the nearest seat, while Ivar hastened to explain to the old mountaineer the circumstances that had conspired to render the mistress of Castle Grand a fugitive.

Magroff listened with more or less patience, frequently interrupting Ivar to give expression to strong terms of indignation.

"My poor young lady has come to the right place!" he said, at length, when the young knight had concluded. "This place is so secluded that she might be here months and King Reginald would be none the wiser. Why, we never even heard that Castle Grand had been besieged. We never even heard that the knight Ivar had been exiled. We did hear that you and our noble lady were betrothed, but that was all! You can stay here as long as you please and none will be the wiser."

"The king will scour the entire realm in the effort to find us," said Ivar. "We cannot therefore remain here long. We ask you to procure a boat for us and assist our escape. We shall go to England and ask the protection of King Henry."

"Well thought of," said Magroff. "Remain here a day or two, until the first hue-and-cry be over, and your escape will be easy. I will attend to everything. Trust yourselves to my keeping. I will die before harm shall come to you."

The fugitives expressed their thanks warmly.

The generous, warm-hearted old mountaineer was disclaiming their gratitude, when a woman, habited after the fashion of her day and class, in linsey gown and white kerchief, made her appearance.

This was Elsie, Magroff's wife.

She was a broad-faced, broad-figured dame, with a placid, good-natured countenance. She made a low obeisance to the Lady Matilda, betraying in looks and manner her surprise at beholding the mistress of Castle Grand in her humble home at that hour.

Magroff hastened to enlighten his wife in regard to their visitors.

Then the old couple showed themselves the very incarnation of kindness and hospitality.

Magroff conducted Ivar to a room opening off one side of the hall.

Elsie led the Lady Matilda to a chamber on the opposite side of the hall. A closet adjoined, and this was appointed for the use of the dressing-woman.

Matilda's room was low and wide, with two windows.

The bed was high and wide, and shut in by curtains that fell from a canopy. The deal floor was strewn with rushes.

The smell of lavender and sweet herbs pervaded the place, which was delightful in its perfect cleanliness.

The good old Elsie ministered to her noble young guest with a sort of maternal tenderness, and did not leave her until the girl's head lay upon her pillow and the heavy eyelids had drooped upon the pale cheeks in an uncontrollable sleepiness.

Then Elsie stole out softly with her rush light, and the wanderers were left to rest.

It was after midday when Matilda and her maid emerged from their rooms into the hall.

The knight Ivar was there, and came forward to meet his betrothed, with chivalrous courtesy in his looks and manner.

They exchanged greetings, and the maiden received the salutations of Magroff and Elsie, returning them warmly.

"Our people have dined, my lady," said Elsie, respectfully. "We thought it best to conceal your presence here from our servants. A royal courier passed this morning, and he left word that the king offered a great reward for the apprehension of Ivar. Our servants heard the offer. They are but poor hinds, my lady, and the sum might tempt them to betray you did they know of your presence here. It is our

custom to take our meals in this hall, therefore I beg you to remain in your rooms at our meal times."

"We will be careful," replied the maiden. "Your warning shall not be lost upon us!"

Elsie had secured the doors that her maid might not enter suddenly and discover the presence of her guests.

Then, aided by her buxom daughters, she spread a repast that seemed to the hungry fugitives a meal fit for a monarch.

There were hot cakes, and golden butter, and translucent honey in the comb. A boar's head, with green herbs stuffed within the open jaws, filled a wooden dish. A venison pasty gave forth a savory odour.

And there were ale and wine, and jugs of milk, and sweetmeats in abundance.

After dinner, Elsie and her daughters cleared the table, while Magroff paid attention to the guests.

"The courier of the king is stirring up the people far and near, my lady," he said. "It would be well for you, I think, to remain here in quiet for a few days until the first tumult of searching is over. Then you can escape from the island better than now. You will be safe here. I have only two farm-labourers. One I sent away this morning. The other I will get rid of this evening, so that you need not be confined to your own rooms for fear of being seen. Will this please you?"

Both Ivar and Matilda coincided in the opinion of Magroff.

It would be better to lie in hiding for a few days than to risk discovery by too precipitate flight.

They thanked their kind host and agreed to remain.

Soon afterward the fugitives returned to their several chambers, while Magroff went forth to dismiss his remaining farm-labourer, and Elsie went to her dairy with her maid.

The windows of Matilda's room looked out upon a fair and pleasant garden, filled with sweet-blooming flowers.

Beyond were trees, a great grove of oaks spreading far up the mountain side.

The maiden sat by her window and enjoyed the fragrance and the afternoon sunshine and fresh mountain air.

The hours passed.

And suddenly, as she sat at her secluded window, a shadow of fear fell heavily upon her, a feeling that danger hovered near grew upon her!

She sprang up, terrified, and retreated from the casement, her eager eyes seeing no one without, and her judgment mocking at her terrors.

She saw no one without, we said. But there was someone lurking in the shelter of a row of bushes at the end of the garden—someone whose gaze had devoured her beauty, whose eyes had flashed with an evil intelligence as their glances had marked her air of high breeding, her jewels and costly attire.

That someone was Ugfried, the farm-labourer whom Magroff had only an hour before sent away from the farm.

Ugfried's loutish face and clumsy figure, and dull, stupid expression, made him seem but half-witted.

But he knew more than people thought. And now, as he backed from his concealment, his face glowed, and he muttered:

"Why, that's the Lady Matilda! The fugitives were here all the while when the courier passed! The king is at Castle Grand, and he offers a brave reward for the capture of Ivar! I'll go to him! I'll get this reward! I'll make myself a rich man just by one night's work! Ha! I'm cunning, and my cunning shall win me riches!"

He stole forth from his concealment with the noiseless wriggle of a serpent, and sped down the mountain-side and away upon the treacherous errand with a haste born of malignity and greed.

"I'll be back with the king's men by day-break!" he thought. "I'll take 'em by surprise! Ha! ha!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Lady Matilda would not return again to her window.

That strange sense of danger stifled and oppressed her.

A curious and inexplicable agitation filled her being.

She moved to and fro with hurried step, her face pale, her troubled glances cast towards the window as if she expected to behold her enemy enter at that opening.

After a little, as no sound broke the stillness, she grew calm and reassured, and even ventured to smile at what she deemed her nervousness and folly.

"I am a coward," she said to herself, in keen reproach—"a weak, miserable coward! What could harm us in this lonely spot? Who would look for us here?"

She dismissed her terrors as childish, and presently ventured out into the hall, where Magroff and his family were gathered.

The maid had been dismissed to the dairy, and Ivar was pacing the hall when Matilda appeared.

He came forward to meet her, his handsome face beaming, his hands outstretched. In the warmth and sunshine of his presence the maiden regained her usual courage and was bright and merry and winsome, as she had ever been in her own stately home at Castle Grand.

Supper was served by Elsie and her daughters, and at an early hour the fugitives, unconscious of impending danger, retired again to their rooms.

The Lady Matilda dropped asleep almost as soon as her head touched her pillows.

She slept profoundly for hours, but awakened suddenly in the darkness that preceded the dawn, with again that stifling sense of danger that had oppressed her so vividly upon the previous evening.

She tossed for a few moments restlessly upon her pillow, and then, quivering in every nerve with that singular uneasiness, she arose and went to her window.

All was darkness without, a dense, impenetrable gloom.

No sound penetrated the stillness save the rustling of leaves and branches in the stealthy breeze.

The maiden watched and listened for a brief space, and then awakened her attendant, communicating her uneasiness to her.

"Something is going to happen," said the Lady Matilda—"something terrible! I shall dress at once. Darken the window, Mary, and light the lamp."

The woman obeyed. The Lady Matilda dressed herself quickly and completely, the nurse following her example.

Then the maiden extinguished the light and leaned again from the casement.

Still no hint of danger in that gloom and silence.

"Mary," said her young mistress, in a whisper, "awaken Ivar and Magroff. It is better to suffer from a false alarm than to be taken unawares by a real one."

Mary withdrew to do the maiden's bidding.

But a very few minutes passed before the young knight Ivar and Magroff were in the hall, fully dressed, anxious and eager, and Matilda came forth to join them.

"What have you heard?" asked her lover, taking one of the maiden's cold hands in both his warm ones. "What has occurred to alarm you?"

"Nothing, except a singular feeling that harm is on its way to us," answered Matilda. "Do not think me childish, Ivar. I could not sleep. I feel strangely afraid."

"You are safe here, my lady," said Magroff, heartily. "If you fear anything let me go forth to see that all is well. I will not be gone long."

He unfastened the door and went out.

He returned a few minutes later, panting, white and breathless.

"I went down the mountain-path," he said, closing the door behind him and leaning against

it heavily, "and I heard the stealthy approach of armed men. The king's soldiers are close upon us, guided by that lout I discharged to-day. The traitor! He shall pay for this!"

"We must fly!" cried Ivar, with that promptness which characterised him. "Not only for our own sake, but for yours, Magroff. If you are found harbouring us, after the proclamation of the king, you will be severely dealt with. Stand aside, my friend. Let us be gone!"

"But where will you go?" asked the farmer, standing aside.

"I know these mountains well. We can easily find refuge," replied Ivar. "Come, Matilda. Let us hasten!"

They shook hands heartily with the good farmer and his wife, who had now appeared, and Ivar cautiously opened the great house-door.

The enemy was not yet within hearing.

The fugitives in a dead silence crept out into the farmyard, while Magroff secured the door and retired to his room with his wife, and extinguished the lights.

There was an unpleasant chill in the crisp morning air.

The darkness lay like a dense pall over the mountains and valleys.

It was the dreariest hour in all the twenty-four for wanderers out of doors, and the delicately-nurtured Matilda felt her heart sink, and a feeling of inexpressible dreariness and foreboding settled down upon her soul as she crept across the farmyard and into the wood beyond.

Her nature was essentially hopeful and elastic, and it was not long before she had regained much of her usual courage.

Her hand in Ivar's, she moved rapidly forward, his warm clasp imparting to her new life and strength.

They came to a halt in the wood, and the young knight said:

"The king intends to scour the island for us, if necessary, it seems. I wish we could get away from the island. So long as we remain in Reginald's domain, we are not safe, and shall scarcely know a minute's peace. The most remote cavern will scarcely hide us from his spies."

"The blockade can scarcely extend far up the coast," said Matilda. "I know many of the people along these shores, and if we were to go a few miles farther on we might procure a boat. Shall we try it?"

They decided this question in the affirmative.

Action followed swift upon decision. They resumed their journey, making their way to the highroad, and moved forward rapidly, hand in hand.

The darkness began to lessen.

The grey streaks of the dawn began to pierce the gloom.

Slowly the morning deepened, and at last the sun arose in a red glow and the day was inaugurated.

But by sunrise the three fugitives were some miles on their journey.

They sat down to rest under a spreading tree.

No signs of pursuit were to be seen. They were in the midst of a lonely region, with no habitations in sight.

By this time, the Lady Matilda had thought of a possible refuge, the home of one of her retainers some miles farther up the coast, and they presently resumed their weary march.

An hour or two later Ivar detected the sounds of horse's hoofs approaching over the road they had come.

Fortunately a bend in the road intervened between them and the rider. The fugitives hastily concealed themselves in a wayside thicket, and had scarcely done so when a man in the uniform of the king's soldiers rode by in great haste, looking neither to the right nor to the left as he passed.

"A royal courier," whispered Ivar. "He carries the king's proclamation of my outlawry, and the offer or reward for my capture."

"This will head us off," said Matilda.

"Not so. He will travel far and fast. We can follow in his tracks and escape his observation. There are few in these parts who would venture to go counter to your wishes, Lady Matilda. Most of these farmers and fishermen are your own tenants."

"True, and they will be faithful to my interests," said the maiden. "We have little to fear, yet let us be on our guard. We found a traitor in the house of Magroff, you remember."

They resumed their flight, keeping in or near the highway for the most part, but occasionally taking refuge in the woods when their watchful glances detected the approach of some distant traveller.

In these days there are no woods in all the island, but in ancient times there were large forests, and in the days of King Reginald these forests were in their prime.

They afforded a secure hiding-place for the fugitives, the undergrowth being thick and densely leaved.

It was past midday when the travellers, tired and hungry, came out upon a hill overlooking the sea and a portion of the coast.

Below them, upon a little cove, and quite near to the water, nestled a low and quaint old farmhouse, with gardens and pastures in its rear. In front of it were jagged rocks, an old boat-house, and a sailing-boat rocking idly upon the shining waters.

A smoke curled upward from the chimney. One or two men were on the rocks with fishing-nets.

A woman was in the garden, but she disappeared within the house almost as soon as seen.

"I have visited that house more than once," said the maiden. "We shall find help there. Yet, for fear the king's courier may have stopped here, and be here at this very moment, Mary had better go down to the farmhouse first. Baltred is Mary's relative, and her coming cannot excite comment or suspicion."

The old nurse, in accordance with this suggestion, began the descent to the farmhouse. Matilda and Ivar seated themselves in the shade of a tree and watched her laborious progress.

Some fifteen minutes later they beheld the old woman cross the farm-garden, approach the kitchen door, and pass into the house.

They waited in keen suspense for her reappearance.

Five minutes—ten minutes—passed. A woman came to the door and called one of the men at work upon the fishing net.

Then ensued a longer period of waiting, but at last old Mary appeared in the doorway and waved her handkerchief, a signal that all was well, and that the lovers might descend to the farmhouse.

They hastened to do so.

When they entered the garden, Baltred and his entire family came forth to meet them. There were no servants in the household, the men upon the rocks being Baltred's sons. The Lady Matilda and her lover were welcomed with warmth and heartiness, and were almost carried into the house.

The great kitchen, or house-place, as it was called, looked very inviting to the wanderers. The floor was of stone, and strewn with rushes. Everything was spotlessly clean. The great yawning chimney contained a fire of blazing logs, over which kettles were suspended. A savory odour filled the air. A table, scoured white as milk, was spread for the fugitives, and three women, mother and daughters, made haste to place the meal they had prepared upon it.

Fish, fresh from the sea, and delicately cooked, bread, cakes, cold game, and sweetmeats, furnished a tempting repast, and the wanderers did full justice to it.

After dinner a consultation was held.

Baltred declared that his boat was at the Lady Matilda's service, and that after nightfall he would set out with the fugitives for England.

He begged them to make themselves comfortable under his roof in the interval of waiting,

placing himself and all that he had at their service.

Baltred's offers were gratefully accepted, and his guests enjoyed the rest and comfort so generously afforded them.

They were informed that the king's messenger had passed that morning, and that he had declared to them the king's proclamation of outlawry against Ivar.

The messenger had gone on and would return to Douglas by another route, issuing the king's proclamation on his way.

Matilda and Ivar thus felt little uneasiness in regard to their safety, although they knew that bands of soldiers were without doubt scouring the country for them, and might even find their way to this lonely dwelling.

The afternoon passed uneventfully. The lovers and the old nurse rested, while Baltred and his sons cleaned the little fishing-vessel, provisioned her, and made her taut and trim for the anticipated voyage.

A little after sunset the family sat down to a bountiful supper, their guests with them, and occupying the place of honour.

The long twilight came on and deepened into night.

The slender crescent moon hung low in the sky.

Myriad stars shone with golden glow, reflecting themselves in the rippling sea. There was a gentle breeze blowing from the west, and it promised to grow stronger soon.

It was such a night as the fugitives might have prayed for, and they hailed it with joy and thanksgiving.

It was after ten o'clock when Baltred came up from the boat and announced everything in readiness for the voyage.

The lovers and Matilda's old nurse, having made their adieux to the women of the household, went down upon the rocks and entered the little row-boat and were conveyed to the larger vessel that lay anchored a few rods distant.

Then the sails were unfurled to the breeze, and the little craft headed boldly for the sea.

The Lady Matilda and her attendant descended to the cabin.

Ivar stood on the deck, leaning over the low railing, and scanning with eagle glances the waters, as far as his vision could sweep.

The boat lay in a little cove, shut in by two lines of rocks, forming protecting arms. These rocky bluffs shut out from view all the sea, excepting that portion directly in front of the cove, and the sphere of Ivar's vision was therefore limited.

The vessel moved over the waves, gaining speed with every yard of travel. A few minutes, and she was abreast the outer point of the nearest bluff.

Another minute, and she was out upon the open sea.

And now a cry came simultaneously from the lips of Baltred and his sons—a cry of astonishment and dismay.

For there, not a quarter of a mile distant, and under full sail, were two of the king's ships bearing down upon them.

(To be Continued.)

BED-BUG SPIDERS.

PERHAPS there are not very many aware of the great utility of at least one species of the common house spider as a destroyer of bed-bugs. The latter became introduced into my house (a new one) in a child's bedstead bought at a sale. I tried all possible means to exterminate them, but seemingly without effect, as they had got into the walls and extended to different rooms. One day I noticed what I thought to be a very large bed-bug carrying off a very small spider of half its size. This I was determined to prevent, and went with a small piece of stick to separate and kill the former. They first ran very lively along the floor in opposite directions, but to my great surprise I saw the little spider

wheel around, pursue, seize, and bear off the bug in triumph with great ease.

A further search revealed one day a spider's web in which hung about half a dozen dead bugs like carcasses in a butcher's stall, for the spider, who generally depends on his net for securing his prey, had apparently on this occasion left it for so precious a morsel. I forthwith gave directions that no spider's web was to be brushed down for a time, much preferring the remedy in this case to the bugs; and whether it was that the spiders had the best of them I cannot say, but the result was that in a little while they became totally extinct.

There is another species of the spider, numerous but very seldom seen, which does not make webs, but pounces on its prey, and lives in crevices. It is harmless, one of the least repugnant looking, but one of the most extraordinarily active little customers in the insect creation. If it were found that "bug" was "venison" to that spider, and it could be introduced into houses, the former might make their wills.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE DRAMA.

PRINCESS'S THEATRE.

MESSRS. JAS. ALBERRY and Joseph Hatton are practised playwrights, yet we cannot compliment them on an entire success in what the announcements call "a new and original drama in four acts," bearing the title of "No. 20; or, the Bastille of Calvados." To most playgoers this original drama will appear more French than the French dramas themselves. The story, which is certainly fraught with strong and sensational situations, may be thus summarised. At the opening of the play the Duc de Nemours marries Blanche de Longueville, and is almost immediately thereafter stabbed by one Destouche, a dissipated and villainous cousin, who tells us, somewhat abruptly, that he hopes to marry Blanche de Longueville, who is just married to the Duke de Nemours. On the blade of the knife with which he commits the murder is the name of Néron, and this is the name of the hero of the piece. On Néron, therefore, rests the suspicion of the murder, which is strengthened by the fact of his being a former suitor for the hand of the duchess. Néron is, as might be anticipated, accused, tried, and condemned. The suddenly widowed duchess feels convinced of his innocence, and with an awakening of former love, endeavours to save his life. Destouche, succeeding to the wealth and estates of Nemours, determines on his destruction. Blanche, disguised as a peasant girl, seduces the governor of the Bastille into a flirtation, induces him to put the prisoner (No. 20) into a wrong-numbered cell, whence he can escape, and escape he does. The means are almost comic, and produced an unfortunate effect. The rope for the purpose is sewn into the petticoat of the supposed servant girl, who drops it into the cell to which the unhappy Néron is removed by the governor, while cakes and wine in the prison, with pretty girls in the grated dungeons, seems to be the order of the day in the Bastille of Calvados. The scene of the escape gave us some ingenious stage machinery and effects. We see the outside of the prison and the roof thereof, whence Néron drops and is picked up by a boat and conveyed to a hermit's cave. The fugitive is, of course, fired at and missed, and the bamboozled governor, turning on his betrayer, is dumbfounded when the supposed soubrette, dropping her cloak, cries "Stand back! I am Blanche de Nemours!"

The villain Destouche, prostrate with remorse, now that his villainy has culminated in success, repairs to the hermit's cave, and there confesses his crimes. His enemy, Néron, disguised as a monk, receives his confession, and imposes on him a penance at the gate of St. Olaf. Then he confronts him at a bal masqué, and the two enemies draw swords in a desperate encounter,

so admirably sustained by Mr. Charles Warner and Mr. Barnes, that the house echoed with the cheering. A ballet or Puchonello dance here introduced, certainly tended to "drag" the piece, and detract from the excitement of the scene. The final discomfiture, death, and confession of Destouche were effectively played and the curtain fell on the "triumph of true love," in the persons of Néron and Blanche de Nemours. Mr. Charles Warner's Destouche was decidedly the hero, rather than Néron, Mr. Barnes, who nevertheless played the lover in a manly and tender spirit. Miss Fowler's Blanche was an interesting study of an unequal and trying part. Mr. Jackson made Chadrone, a comic lawyer, somewhat farcical. Mr. Redmund was portentously emphatic as a priest, while Miss Rose Berends in the subordinate part of Mimi, was intelligent and graceful. Mr. Walter Gooch has mounted the piece with tasteful liberality and judgment, and nothing has been wanting on the part of the management or actors to secure the success of Messrs. Alberty and Hatton's picturesque melodrama.

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

We have only space this week to record the marked success of Mr. Alberty's admirable play. In our next number we shall attempt to do "The Crisis" justice in a critical notice.

GLOBE THEATRE.

MR. HENDERSON has made arrangements for a season of morning performances of grand juvenile Italian Opera at the Globe Theatre, commencing on Saturday afternoon, December 21, and continuing every week day until further notice. The troupe is composed of the celebrated juvenile Italian artists known as the "Grande Compagnia del Quirinale de Musica e Ballo, Composta di Giovanetti Romani."

FOLLY THEATRE.

THE "Wedding March" goes as briskly at the Folly as ever it did at the Court, and Lionel Brough, who declares his daughter's engagement on and off every five minutes, is a most comical paterfamilias. Lydia Thompson plays the part of the Marchioness of Market Harborough in true burlesque style, and Hamilton Astley, a rising actor, is a capital Duke of Turnipshire. The revival is thoroughly successful.

MR. IRVING has made an engagement with Mr. Chippendale for that gentleman to play Polonius in his revival of "Hamlet" at the Lyceum Theatre.

MESSRS. DOUGLASS (Standard) have become lessees of the Park Theatre, and are preparing the Christmas pantomime; the subject is "Ali Baba; or, the Forty Thieves."

On Saturday "Our Boys" reached the 1,256th night of performance. Messrs. David James and Thorne having resumed their old parts, the piece seemed to go with renewed animation.

Mrs. HOWARD PAUL's return to the stage has been enthusiastically welcomed by crowded audiences at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool. The occasion was the production of a new comedy by Mr. Arthur Mathison, entitled "A Battle Royal," in which the accomplished lady sustained the heroine—a strong-minded woman. Its author, who himself played, an amusing American, was called, and the piece, which we shall doubtless soon see transferred to the London boards, announced for repetition amid general applause.

MADAME ADELINA PATTI has been creating quite a furore in the upper circles of Berlin, where she has, for the first time, been fulfilling an engagement at the Grand Opera.

ENGLISH OPERA AT COVENT GARDEN.—We are to have shortly a series of English Ballad Operas at Covent Garden, under the direction of

Mr. Samuel Hayes. Our great English tenor, Sims Reeves, is engaged. Among other things worth hearing will be the last act of "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Sims Reeves as Edgardo.

DEATH OF MR. ALFRED WIGAN.

THE announcement of the decease of this well-known actor will be received with regret by a large circle of friends and the general public. He expired on Friday, the 29th ult., at Folkestone, where he had repaired in hopes that sea air might repair his health, which had for some time been precarious. During his last illness telegrams of sympathy and inquiry had been addressed to Mrs. Wigan and his son, Mr. Gordon Wigan, from some of the highest personages in the land.

For forty years Mr. Wigan's name has been before the public, first as a youthful and promising actor at St. James's, Drury Lane, and Covent Garden; afterwards as an artist of great and versatile abilities, a spirited and successful manager, and an occasional adapter of French dramas. His first important engagement was under Madame Vestris at Covent Garden in 1839, when he was only twenty-one years of age. In 1843 he joined the Strand Company, and in the following year appeared with his wife (Miss Leonora Pincoff, whom he had married in 1841) at the Lyceum. It was here where Mr. Wigan succeeded in taking his place in the very front rank of his profession, which he retained as long as he appeared on the stage. In 1853 he became the lessee of the Olympic Theatre, and threw himself with extraordinary energy into managerial work, taking all the while his full share of stage business.

In 1857 hard work and anxiety so impaired his health that he was compelled to withdraw from the management. In the autumn of 1860 Mr. Wigan became the manager of the St. James's, and in 1867 the direction of the new Queen's Theatre was placed in his hands. In 1863 he formed one of the corps dramatique of the Gaiety. Ill-health again interrupted his engagements, and ultimately compelled him to relinquish all hope of systematic stage work. At a benefit matinee at the Gaiety, in March last year, Mr. Wigan appeared, and for the last time, on the stage. Since that time his health has gradually declined. He was removed to Folkestone during the summer, hoping to recruit at the seaside, but little good appears to have been derived from the change.

The deceased was not only an accomplished actor and a skilled musician, but a man of generous sympathies and high character, who adorned and dignified his profession.

STATISTICS.

THE "City and Guilds of London Institute for the Advancement of Technical Education" may be considered as now an established fact. A meeting of the Board of Governors, which the provisional committee of the guilds had recommended, was recently held at the Mercers' Hall. We learn from this that the amount of available income already promised is above £12,000, and large sums are anticipated from the companies who have not yet joined the scheme. We regret to find that the Board of Governors deferred the consideration of the arrangements for the London School, until they see what the Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition propose to do at South Kensington.

THE fund for the relief of the shareholders of the City of Glasgow Bank now amounts to a quarter of a million: Glasgow has contributed £148,000, Edinburgh £60,000, Paisley £11,000, and Greenock £3,000. Readings given by Mr. Henry Irving and Mr. J. L. Toole, at the new Public Halls, Glasgow, in aid of the City of Glasgow Bank Relief Fund, realised £380. The readings by these gentlemen in Edinburgh realised £350. So that, by their exertions, there has been added to the fund £730.



[NOT BY STRAED.]

CARL'S ADVENTURE.

"WHAT shall I bring you from town to-day, mother?"

Mrs. Bradley looked at the bright, cheery face of the speaker, a lad of not more than fourteen, but unusually tall and well-developed for his years.

"I don't know that we need anything, do we, Carl? That is, anything we can do without, you know."

Here Mrs. Bradley paused, as if unwilling to sadden that brave, hopeful spirit by alluding to the burden that weighed so heavily upon her own heart.

"Yes, I know, mother. But I know, too, that this is your birthday; and that the best mother and prettiest little woman in the world deserves a present of some kind. So what shall it be?"

Mrs. Bradley blushed and smiled like a girl in her teens.

She had not only been remarkably pretty in her youth, but was so still; looking altogether too young to be the mother of a boy so old as Carl.

"You won't always think so, I'm afraid! Bring yourself safely back to me, together with all the money you can get for the fruit and vegetables, and that will be all the present I shall want. I hope they will sell well, because—"

"They ought to sell well," said Carl, filling

up the wistful pause that followed, and looking with pride and satisfaction upon the contents of the neat market-waggon, and which were, mainly, the result of his own skill and industry.

The display was both varied and tempting. There were green peas and corn; fresh, crisp lettuce and celery, bunches of radishes, beets and turnips.

All of them arranged with so much care and nicety as to greatly enhance their attractiveness and value.

The fruit consisted of early pears and apples, whose mellow fragrance filled the air, together with cherries and currants, which gleamed forth redly and temptingly from out the green leaves that shaded them.

"Never fear, mother," laughed Carl, as he gathered up the reins: "I could dispose of twice the amount, if they were all like this."

Leaning over the rustic gate, Mrs. Bradley gazed after the retreating waggon, a glow of maternal pride and tenderness upon the fair, sweet face, which gave it a new and wondrous beauty.

"Carl is a real treasure, a great comfort to me!" she thought: "He is like his father."

Then a feeling of compunction touched her heart, as she thought how little love she had given to the grave, quiet man of nearly twice her years, who had been to her so kind a friend and protector, mingled with an emotion of thankfulness that he had never known it, that the wifely duty, the grateful affection, which were all she had to bestow, had been so much to him

that he had blest her for them with his dying breath.

But for that fatal quarrel, and still more fatal misunderstanding, how different her life had been!

But He had been very good to her, especially in giving her so good and hopeful a son. And if, by their united efforts, they could save their little home, she would be content.

It was always a long and lonely day to his mother when Carl was away. He was so strong and patient, so merry and cheerful, that all the sunshine seemed to vanish from the house when he left it.

Mrs. Bradley had been more like a child to her husband than a wife, by whom she had been considered as something to be carefully guarded from toil and hardship; and Carl had fallen into very much the same way of treating her.

It was amusing to see the protecting air he assumed, by virtue of his sex, and superior size and strength.

He liked to have his mother in the garden with him, but more for the sake of her society than work.

If she attempted anything harder than sorting or arranging the fruit and vegetables, he would say:

"That's too hard work for you, mother; I'll do it!"

Speaking so like his father as sometimes to almost startle her.

In spite of the substantial lunch put up for him, Carl always returned—to use his own expression—"as hungry as a bear!"

So the sun had hardly touched the western hills when Mrs. Bradley commenced preparations for supper.

The snowy cloth was laid upon the round table, and the plates, knives and forks, and shining tea-service arranged on it with as much care and precision as if she had been expecting some guest of distinction.

In front of Carl's plate was a platter of cold meat and vegetables, which, she knew by experience, would receive his first attention.

Marshaled around this were loaves of white and brown bread, a plate of honey, and dishes of currants and raspberries.

Everything was in readiness except the tea, which Mrs. Bradley left for the last moment, so as to have it nice and fresh.

The sun had gone down behind the hills. Blossom, a beautiful Alderney, whose big black eyes looked almost human in their colour and expression, was lowing at the bars, as though remonstrating at this unwonted forgetfulness of her claims.

"I've half a mind to milk her myself," said Mrs. Bradley, as she glanced at the shining pail on its wooden peg in the porch. "I don't see what keeps Carl!"

Then the remembrance of Carl's parting injunction induced her to go down again to the gate, to see if there were any signs of him.

As she did so, she caught a glimpse of the waggon coming slowly up the hill, Carl sitting in front, holding something very carefully on his knees.

With an inward wonder as to what this could be, she darted back into the summer-kitchen, and had just removed the ashes from a bed of glowing coals, when Carl entered, coming in through the front way.

"Why, Carl, what kept you so late?"

"Oh, mother!" cried Carl, excitedly, "I've had such a strange adventure! Come into the front room and see what I've brought you!"

Wondering not a little, Mrs. Bradley followed Carl into the front room.

And there, upon a pretty, chintz-covered lounge, lay a beautiful little girl, about four years old, fast asleep.

"Goodness me!" she ejaculated, with uplifted eyes and hands, "where did you get that?"

"I didn't get her," responded Carl, "she came to me."

"I believe the Lord sent her!" added the boy,

dropping his voice, a solemn look coming into his eyes as they rested upon the sweet picture before him.

And, certainly, there was never a sweeter picture than that round, rosy, dimpled face, with the bright halo of golden curls that encircled it.

As Mrs. Bradley gazed upon the little stranger, its beauty and helplessness appealed strongly to the purest and sweetest instincts of her nature.

"It is a very lovely child, Carl. But I don't understand."

"Of course you don't!" laughed Carl, rubbing his hands with boyish glee, as he took another survey of his new-found treasure. "How should you, when I haven't told you?"

"To go back to the beginning, the first time I saw the little thing she was sitting on Mrs. Moreland's steps, crying. Mrs. Moreland is the lady who engaged so many of our purple plums. I had sold everything but them, and when I went up the steps with the basket I filled the child's chubby hands as full as they could hold.

"I was all of fifteen minutes in Mrs. Moreland's. I thought I should never get away; she had so much to say, and it took her such a time to get change and have the plums measured. I didn't see the little girl when I came out, and supposed she belonged to somebody in one of the houses near by, and that she had gone in.

"I turned Charley's head homeward; and you know how he pricks up his ears and trots along when I do that. I had got quite a piece out of town when I heard a little cry. At first I thought it was along the roadside, and stopping the wagon, looked around. Not seeing anything, I drove on. Pretty soon I heard another cry louder and more impatient, and which sounded as if it was just at the back of me. I turned my head, and there the little thing was, sitting among the empty baskets and boxes!

"I was astonished enough at first, and then I saw just how it happened. You see, the wagon was close to the steps, and she had clambered into the back part, after more plums, perhaps, and being all tired out wandering around, gone to sleep."

"But, Carl, you ought to have carried her right back."

"So I did, mother; that's what made me so late. I drove straight back to Mrs. Moreland's, and she didn't know anything about her. I asked the people in some of the other houses and they didn't either. One man told me to take her to the station. But I wouldn't do that—such a little bit of a baby—so I just brought her home to you."

Here the child awoke and began to cry, partly from hunger and partly from seeing the strange faces that bent over her.

Those violet eyes, with their grieved, wondering look, awoke a strange thrill in Mrs. Bradley's heart, and clasping their owner in her arms, she carried her out to where Carl's supper was waiting for him.

Carl would have fed the hungry child with the substantial food so grateful and necessary to him, though he yielded readily to his mother's suggestion that warm new milk would be much better.

While he was out milking, Mrs. Bradley questioned the child, but could gain no information, save that her name was Dora and her papa's name "papa."

There was no name upon the clothing, whose elegance and fineness of texture indicated that she was the child of wealth, carefully and tenderly nurtured.

Dora partook eagerly of the nice bread and milk that was prepared for her, falling asleep immediately after, so that it was with some difficulty that she was inducted into the little night-dress, which Carl could hardly believe that he had ever worn, even when his mother told him so, and how quickly he outgrew it.

He watched the process with great interest.

"You'll keep her, won't you, mother?" he said as he kissed one of the white, dimpled feet. "You've often said that you wished you had a little girl."

"If no one claims her. We must do all we can to find out to whom she belongs. There are hearts that are very sorrowful to-night, mourning the loss of their darling."

The next day Mrs. Bradley wrote out a full description of Dora for the daily newspaper, and which she gave to Carl to take to the village post-office.

As he walked along, thinking of the mortgage, which threatened to deprive them of their little home, and wishing that he was a man, that he might get a man's wages, he saw an elegant barouche approaching, drawn by a span of coal-black horses, whose silver-mounted harness glittered in the sunlight.

It contained only two persons, its liveried driver, and a stately-looking, middle-aged, gentleman, who ordered the carriage to stop as soon as he saw Carl.

"Boy, can you tell me where the Widow Bradly lives?"

"That is my mother's name. She lives in the third house, on the right hand, straight ahead."

The man smiled.

"I am Colonel Haviland. You must be Carl Bradley, who found and took such kind care of my little Dora. I am impatient to see her—jump in and tell my man where to stop."

There was something more than curiosity in the keen eyes that surveyed Carl as he obeyed.

"Was not your mother's maiden name Wynne—Helen Wynne."

"Yes, sir."

"I used to know her when she was a girl, and a very beautiful girl she was, too."

"My mother is very beautiful now."

"I don't doubt it," smiled the colonel. "And you are her son? Dear! dear! how time does fly, to be sure."

Mrs. Bradley was sitting upon the vine-covered porch, with Dora in her arms, who had fallen fast asleep, and did not see the two until they were close upon her.

Strange and tender emotions stirred Colonel Haviland's heart as he saw that fair, sweet woman, the never-forgotten love of his youth, holding his motherless child to her bosom.

"It is Colonel Haviland, mother," said Carl, in response to that startled, inquiring look.

"Helen—Mrs. Bradley, how shall I thank you for your kindness to my little daughter? I hope you have not found her troublesome?" he added as the suddenly-awakened child sprang eagerly to his arms.

"On the contrary, I—that is to say, we, Carl and I, shall be sorry to part with her."

"You need not unless you choose. My lad," turning to Carl, "will you go down to the road and look after my horses?"

Carl could see no necessity for "looking after" the horses, whose driver appeared to be a faithful and competent man; but a sort of instinct kept him down by the gate until Colonel Haviland made his appearance.

Carl found his mother in a state of agitation, whose nature he could not define; there were traces of tears upon her face, and yet he thought that he had never seen her eyes so bright, or her cheeks so blooming.

To his great delight Colonel Haviland decided to leave Dora, for the present, with her new friends, to use his own words, "for the sake of country air and country living." But he came to see her very often—almost every day, in fact; so that Carl was, in a measure, prepared for the announcement that was made to him one evening as they were all out on the porch together, and which the colonel gave in a way peculiar to him.

"I have news for you, my boy, and which I hope will make you as happy as it has made me. Your mother is going to be my wife, and Dora your own little sister!"

The boy was silent, and his face being hidden by the curly head of the child that was clinging

to his neck, his mother could not see how he took this.

"Are you sorry, my son? I shall love you just the same."

Carl smiled as he met that anxious, appealing look.

"I am glad, mother; for your sake and mine, very glad."

M. G. H.

MARRY NOT WITHOUT LOVE.

THE most egregious blunder in a life's history is committed when a woman marries one man and loves another. This, unfortunately, is by no means an anomalous occurrence. History repeats itself daily when women, actuated by worldly pride or influenced by friends, are led to the altar by those men whom they barely like, while in the inmost recesses of their hearts they love another, and constantly long for another's sympathy, another's kiss, another's love. A woman walking the avenues of life, having made this mistake, tries to be, and sometimes fancies she is, happy, but when in the solitude of her own thoughts misgivings arise which renders life miserable to a degree.

Let no chaste and virtuous woman, endowed with God-given attributes, plunge thoughtlessly into this deep and engulfing current, without seriously considering her position, for, let her be warned that the step once taken is irrevocable and life-binding, and no power on earth can relieve her misery or assist in making her life endurable. What is life without love? Pitiable indeed is that woman who, either by her voluntary act or through the influence of others, denies herself the pleasure it was the Almighty's intention she should enjoy. Take the young girl who marries an old man, and what is her life? A constant despair and longing for what "might have been."

A very common occurrence is the marriage of a young woman to a man who idolizes her, but for whom she has but toleration. Yet carried away by the prospect of an easy life, or influenced by parents or friends who often have a selfish motive in influencing, places herself beyond the reach of that destiny for which she was intended and for which she was created. Let sober, temperate, deliberate and mature thoughts be her guide, and she will then act according to her heart's promptings, and in doing thus we challenge an instance when regret has followed.

It is said experience is the best of teachers, but what is experience but mature thought? Then let her be actuated by her own motives, influenced by her own desires, controlled by her own circumstances, exercise her own judgment, and abide the promptings of her own heart, and we shall have fewer unhappy marriages.

THE GOOD WIFE.

How much of this world's happiness and prosperity is contained in the compass of these two short words! Her influence reaches all. The power of a wife for good or for evil is altogether irresistible. Home, the place of happiness, must be for ever unknown but for her welcome presence.

A good wife helps a man to be wise, courageous, strong, hopeful and to endure. A bad one is confusion, weakness and despair.

No condition is hopeless when the wife possesses firmness, energy, economy. There is no outward prosperity which can long counteract indolence, folly and extravagance at home. No spirit can long resist bad domestic arrangements.

Man is strong, but his heart is not adamant. He delights in enterprise and action, but to sustain him he needs a tranquil mind. He expends his whole moral force in his conflicts with the world. His feelings are daily lacerated to the utmost point of endurance by the perpetual irritations and disappointments of his daily life.

To recover his equanimity and composure, home must be to him a place of repose and peace, or cheerfulness and comfort; and his soul renews its strength and again goes forth with fresh vigour to encounter the troubles of the world.

But if at home he finds no rest; is met by a bad temper, sullenness or gloom, the heart breaks, the spirits are crushed, hope vanishes, and the man sinks into total despair.

Let the wife know, then, that she ministers at the very fountain of life and happiness. It is her hand that gives the cup of refreshing water, or casts into that cup the branch of bitterness which makes it poison and death. Her ardent spirit breathes the breath of life into all enterprise. Her patience and constancy are mainly instrumental in carrying forward to completion the best human designs. Her more delicate moral sensibility is the unseen power which is ever at work to purify and refine society. And the nearest glimpse of heaven that mortals get on earth is that domestic circle which she has trained to intelligence, virtue and love; which her radiant presence is the centre and the sun.

FUTURE HOUSEKEEPERS.

We sometimes catch ourselves wondering how many of the young ladies whom we meet with are to perform the part of housekeepers, when the young men who now eye them so admiringly have persuaded them to become their wives? We listen to those young ladies of whom we speak, and hear them not only acknowledging, but boasting, of their ignorance of all household duties, as if nothing would so lower them in the estimation of their friends, as the confession of an ability to make bread and pies, or cook a piece of meat, or a disposition to engage in any useful employment.

Speaking from our own youthful recollections, we are free to say that taper fingers and lily hands are very pretty to look at with a young man's eyes, and sometimes we have known the artless innocence of practical knowledge evinced by a young miss to appear rather interesting than otherwise. But we have lived long enough to learn that life is full of rugged experiences, and that the most loving, romantic and delicate people must live on cooked or otherwise food, and the house kept clean and tidy by industrious hands.

And for all the practical purposes of married life, it is generally found that for a husband to sit and gaze at a wife's taper fingers and lily hands, or for a wife to sit and be looked at and admired, does not make the pot boil, or put the smallest piece of food therein.

TALK TO OTHERS.

Don't be niggardly of words. Conversation calls out into light what has been lodged in the recesses and secret chambers of the soul. By occasional hints and incidents it brings old useful notions into remembrance; it unfolds and displays the hidden treasure of knowledge with which reading, observation and study have before furnished the mind. By mutual discourse the soul is awakened and allured to bring forth its hoards of knowledge, and it learns how to render them most useful to mankind. A man of vast reading, without conversation, is like a miser who lives only for himself.

INFLUENCE OF A HOLY LIFE.

THERE is an energy of mortal suasion in a good man's life, passing the highest efforts of the orator's genius. The seen but silent beauty of holiness speaks more eloquently of God and duty than the tongues of men and angels. Let parents remember this. The best inheritance a parent can bequeath to a child is a virtuous ex-

ample, a legacy of hallowed remembrances and associations. The beauty of holiness beaming through the life of a loved relative or friend, is more effectual to strengthen such as do stand in virtue's ways, and raise up those that are bowed down, than precept, command, entreaty, or warning.

Christianity itself owes by far the greater part of its moral power, not to the precepts or parables of Christ, but to his own character. The beauty of that holiness which is enshrined in the four brief biographies of the Man of Nazareth, has done more, and will do more, to regenerate the world and bring in everlasting righteousness than all other agencies put together. It has done more to spread his religion in the world than all that has ever been preached or written on the evidence of christianity.

FACETIÆ.

SHAKESPEARE.

DURING his recent visit to Northampton Henry Irving, the distinguished actor, related an amusing anecdote.

Ten years ago, while passing with Mr. Toole through Stratford-on-Avon, he saw a rustic sitting on a fence.

"That's Shakespeare's house, isn't it?" he asked, pointing to the building.

"Yes."

"Ever been there?"

"No."

"How long has he been dead?"

"Don't know."

"Many people come here?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"Lots."

"Been to the house?"

"No."

"What did he do?"

"Who?"

"Shakespeare."

"Don't know."

"Brought up here?"

"Yes."

"Did he write?"

"Oh, yes, he writ."

"What was it?"

"Don't know."

"Come, you must know."

"Well," said the rustic, "I think he wrote for the Bible!"

SAID one lawyer to another in the Court of Sessions the other day, "You are the biggest idiot in London." The judge told the gentleman that he must not forget that he (the judge) was present.

TAKING things as they come isn't so very difficult. It's parting with them as they go that's hard.

JOHNIE was whipped at school for a piece of mischief done by another boy. Verdict, a misplaced switch.

ARITHMETIC.

A LITTLE girl was sent the other day to buy some lace. The shopman, after putting up the package, said:

"Well, there is one and a half yards of lace at tenpence a yard, how much does it come to?"

To which the miss pertly replied: "Well, I'm not going to tell, I have to study arithmetic all the rest of the week, and I'm not going to bother my head with it Saturdays."

NIGHT-CAPS.

A BRITISH Customs official, on searching a lady's trunk which the owner had sworn contained only clothing for herself and husband, unearthed six bottles of brandy.

"Do you call these clothes?" he sternly demanded.

"Yes," said the lady, softly, "these are night-caps."

A PERSON holding a high official position ob-

jected to pay two shillings and sixpence an hour to a Cambridge graduate for the tuition of his sons; whereupon the tutor sharply retorted, "Do you expect, sir, to get a 'coach' for a less sum per hour than you pay a cab?"

GONE TO STAY.

THE following is a brief conversation between a German and a countryman, who had been inquiring for a friend at the next house:

GERMAN: "Nein, Chane's nod ad home."

VISITOR: "Where is she?"

GERMAN: "She's gone der cemetery down."

VISITOR: "When will she come back?"

GERMAN: "Oh, she von't come back already any more; she's gone to stay—she's det."

JUST DIVORCED.

THE gas suddenly went out at a San Joac concert the other evening, and when it was relit a young lady indignantly accused a happy-looking man who sat on the next bench of kissing her in the darkness. The man tried to explain, but some of the lady's friends seized and proceeded to fire him out with expedition.

As they reached the door the victim managed to gasp out, "Me kiss a woman! Why, I'm just divorced." That settled it. He was apologised to, and the man of experience proudly resumed his seat.

COLD OR HOT.

AN Irishman had a dream which taught him the danger of delay.

"I dreamed," said he, "I was wid the Pope; who was as big a jintleman as any one in the district, an' he axed me wad I drink? Thinks I wad a duck swim? and seein' the Innishowen, and lemons, and sugar on the sideboard, I told him I didn't care if a tuk a wee dhrap of punch Pope."

"Hot or cold?" asked the punch Pope.

"Hot, your Holiness," I replied; and then he stepped down to the kitchen for the bilin' water; but before he got back I woke straight up. And now it's distressing me I didn't take it cowl."

THE TIME.

AN Irishman accosted a gentleman in the street late at night, with a request for the time. The gentleman, suspecting that Pat wished to snatch his watch, gave him a stinging rap on the nose, with the remark, "It has just struck one."

"Be jabbers," retorted Pat, "I'm glad I didn't ax yez an hour ago!"

"I HAVE a great ear, a wonderful ear," said a musician, in the course of conversation. "So has a donkey," replied a bystander.

WHOSE WORK?

A MOTHER who believed that education should go on without cessation said to her little boy, as they were walking along a road:

"That waggon which you see ahead, my son, is the work of a wheelwright."

"Is it," cried the boy, "Then these tracks it makes are wheelwriting, I suppose?"

AN agricultural society offered a premium for the best essay on irrigation. By mistake it was printed irritation, whereupon an honest farmer sent his wife.

LATEST FROM THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

"HULLOA, Charlie! What's the matter? Training for a race?"

"No, Tom? Racing for a train?"

—Punch.

A NEW RHYME FOR JOHN BULL.

"RECTIFICATION" is vexation;

"Haphazard" is bad;

"Activity" perplexes me;

And "papers" drive me mad.

—Punch.

THE Party who Really Secured "Peace with Honour"—Policeman Robinson, when he showed such pluck in arresting the Blackheath burglar.

—Punch.

ADVICE to the Gas Companies (Easier Given than Taken) Apropos of the Electric Light—

"Don't be put out by it."

—Punch.

SHE MEANT WELL.

LODGING-HOUSE KEEPER (to visitor about to depart): "When shall we see yer down again, sir?"

VISITOR: "Oh, I'm sure to come down again directly I'm ill."

L. H. K.: "Ope we shall see yer soon, then, sir."

(The old gentleman thought her most unkind.)
—Fun.

WHY would herring-fishers make good heroes for novels?—Because they sigh when they think of vanished ancestral hauls.
—Fun.

ANOTHER Example of the Prevailing Commercial Depression—The cabman whose business is almost wholly at a stand.
—Funny Folks.

"CHANGE for a Sovereign."—A week at Buckingham Palace.
—Funny Folks.

HIS ASSOCIATES.

At a recent trial a simple-looking fair-haired lad from the north, was asked if he was acquainted with the defendant and he replied:

"Yes."

"Are you sufficiently acquainted with the defendant to know his general habits?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are they good or bad?"

"Fair."

"Now, sir, do you, before this court and jury, testify that you are in the habit of associating with the same kind of company as this defendant?"

"Ah, weel, I associate with all grades and all sorts o' bodies, fra' lawyers up."

"That's all!" said the prosecuting counsel,

HIS RELIGION.

RECENT scene in the Central Criminal Court. Rising young counsel, cross-examining a witness:

"Now, sir, what do you say your name is?"

"Moses Israels."

"And where do you state you live?"

"Petticoat-lane."

"What do you do there—what is your profession?"

"I am a dealer in cloth."

"Oh, a dealer in cloth. Are you in a large way of business?—do you deal in large pieces or small pieces?"

"I deal principally in made-up pieces."

A laugh.

"Oh, I see; in short, you are an old clothes dealer?"

"Well, some people call me so."

"Now, sir, might I ask what your religion is?"

He had not been in court when the oath was administered.

The witness burst out laughing.

"Look here, you asks me my name, and I tells you Moses Israels; you asks me my address, and I tells you Petticoat-lane; you asks me my profession, and I tells you an old clothes dealer; and now you asks me my religion—why, a Quaker, of course."

Loud laughter in court, which was immediately suppressed.

CURIOUS!

It is a fact generally known, that the warmest thing is frieze.
—Judy.

AN AUTHORITY.

PAGE: "The doctor will be disengaged in a few moments. Et—what is the matter with you?"

PATIENT: "I have no appetite."

PAGE: "That's bad!"

—Judy.

DURING THE RECENT SALES.

SCENE: A Lodging House "Drawing-room."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ: Mrs. Bouncer, the landlady, Mr. Waggleby, the lodger.

Mr. W. (loquiter): "Yes, Mrs. Bouncer, I rang the bell on account of this smoke; it's shocking, perfectly asphyxiating!"

Mrs. B.: "I don't know what you mean by

that foreignneering word, sir; but I assure you, it's nothing but the wind, sir, it's the 'orrid, nasty wind as is a-makin' of the chimbley smoke, sir."

Mr. W. (choking, but waggish to the last): "The wind, eh, Mrs. Bouncer? Ah, well, no wonder, for, you know, the scoundrel is always—ahem!—blowing a cloud himself."
—Judy.

PEACE Without Honour—The Peckham burglar.
—Funny Folks.

QUEER QUERY.

CAN a convent be properly termed an uninhabited house?
—Judy.

WICK-WHACK-EDNESS.

WHY are naughty children like stair carpets?
—Because neither can be kept in order without the rod.
—Judy.

FOR THE FIRST LORD.

CAN our new composite gunboats be properly called an "Admiralty Mixture"?
—Judy.

"RENT DAY."

How happy and merry we mortals might be,

In this beautiful land of the brave and the free,

Our consciences easy, our spirits content,

Were it not for the hobgoblin people call "Rent."

Unlike other spectres, he shuns not the light;

He makes his appearance at morn, noon, or night;

No tempest deters him, no lightning he fears,

And his ghostship is callous to "poor, foolish tears."

In the midst of his duty he startles the clerk;

He comes in between the poor scribe and his work;

He wakens the good wife from dreams, heaven-sent,

And shouts in the ear of the invalid—"Rent!"

He comes where the children are happy with mirth;

He takes a free seat on the house-keeper's hearth;

When the host and his guests are at dinner or tea,

This unabashed visitor puts in his plea.

The poor mother says, in the midst of her joys,

"We must lay by a sum, oh! my girls and my boys;

We must go without dainties and save every cent,

For the landlord to-morrow will come for his rent."

Oh! happy the squatter with acres his own,

Where house-rent or taxes are things all unknown—

The nearest to Eden that mortals can be

In this beautiful land of the brave and the free. M. A. K.

GEMS.

To be unkind or rude to others, and yet expect to be treated by them with courtesy and affection, is as selfish as it is absurd.

"WHAT a glorious world this would be, if all its inhabitants could say with Shakespeare's Shepherd, 'I am a true labourer; I earn that I

wear; owe no man hate; envy no man's happiness; glad of other men's good; content with my farm."

We should never remember the benefits we have conferred, nor forget the favours received.

We every day sacrifice principles which we esteem through fear of being blamed by people whom we despise.

It is only through woe that we are taught to reflect, and we gather honey of worldly wisdom not from flowers but thorns.

We often censure the conduct of others when, under the same circumstances, we might not have acted half so well.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

STEWED APPLES.—Make a syrup with one half pound sugar to each pint of water, some lemon peel and juice. Pare and core the apples, and simmer (but do not boil) them, by the side of the fire, turning them, now and then. When pretty clear, take them off, and, if they require it, put them in the pan another day, or warm the syrup and pour over. If wanted for immediate use, three-quarters of a pound of sugar, made into syrup, to twelve apples. Simmer them till pretty clear.

BOILED FOWL AND RICE.—One fowl, mutton broth, two onions, two small blades of pounded mace, pepper and salt to taste, quarter of a pint of rice, parsley and butter. Truss the fowl as for boiling, and put it into a stew-pan, with sufficiently clear, well-skimmed mutton broth to cover it; add the onion, mace, and a seasoning of pepper and salt; stew very gently for about an hour should the fowl be large, and about half an hour before it is ready, put in the rice, which should be well washed and soaked. When the latter is tender strain it from the liquor, and put it on a sieve, reversed, to dry before the fire, and, in the meantime, keep the fowl hot. Dish it, put the rice around as a border, pour a little parsley-and-butter over the fowl, and the remainder send to table in a tureen.

NICE GLOSSY STARCH.—To three cups water take three rounded teaspoonfuls of starch, a pinch of salt, and one teaspoonful of powdered borax. Dissolve your borax in part of the water; then add starch and salt; dip your collars, cuffs, and bosoms into the starch. Your irons must be good; rub them with beeswax, and I promise you a stiff, glossy surface with never a failure.

MISCELLANEOUS.

LORD STAMFORD has offered £100 reward for the conviction of the burglars who broke into his country house recently. This is the second time thieves have entered this house this year.

A GIRL who had been very observant of her parents' mode of exhibiting their charity, being asked what generosity was, answered: "It's giving to the poor all the old stuff you don't want yourself."

ONCE more the smile of Majesty itself is to gladden the hearts of the historians. On the occasion of the marriage of H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught Mr. Henry Irving has been commanded to provide a dramatic entertainment at Windsor Castle. Since the lamented death of the Prince Consort the Queen has not entered the walls of a theatre or witnessed a play—unless, indeed, the costume recitals (as they were called), given by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan and Mr. Alexander Yorke, can be so termed. May this happy occasion be the commencement of a new era!

At a meeting held at the Dublin Mansion House it has been determined, on the motion of the Lord Mayor, to present a national gift from Ireland to the Duke of Connaught on the occasion of his approaching marriage. It has been determined that the subscription shall not exceed £1.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CONSTANCE.—You cannot do better than to use Lamplough's Effervescent Pyretic Saline, as the same is most highly recommended for sickness, headache, nausea, biliousness, indigestion, excessive festival indulgences. Indeed, it may be taken with the best results by the healthy as well as the most weakly. Any chemist will supply you, all the world over.

INQUISITIVE KITTY.—It is usual to give the lady the preference; strictly, the gentleman should take the herb side.

BEATRICE S.—The second marriage is illegal, therefore the woman is at liberty to marry again. The man can be prosecuted for bigamy.

CHARLES EDWARD W.—There is but one species of fur peculiar to England, the silver-tipped rabbit of Lincolnshire. The colour of the fur is grey, of different shades, mixed with longer hair tipped with white. This fur is but little used in England, but meets a ready sale in Russia or China.

R. E.—The Temple takes its name from having been founded by the Knights Templars in England. The Templars were crusaders, who, about the year 1118, formed themselves into a military body at Jerusalem, and guarded the roads for the safety of pilgrims. In time the order became very powerful. The Templars in Fleet Street, in the thirteenth century, frequently entertained the king, the foreign ambassadors, and other great personages.

MEDICUS.—We can with the utmost reliance recommend to you the free use of Holloway's Pills, and in your friend's case his ointment. The pills have a most soothing effect on the internal organs, whilst the latter, used outwardly, is well known as a speedy and effective curative of most of the evils that flesh is heir to.

GROUSE M.—Perhaps the most appropriate reply to a suitor who places, as you have done, not only his personal defects but his "fears" in a conspicuous place before the lady of his love, is the celebrated Queen Elizabeth's answer to Sir W. Raleigh's tremulous writing in her presence:

"Pain would I climb but that I fear to fall."

Upon which Her Majesty said:

"If thy heart fail thee why then climb at all?"

BRITAIN.—You will find the kind of employment of which you are in search is very difficult to obtain unless you have direct acquaintance with the heads of the establishment.

EMILY.—If you turn to your school atlas you will find Rio Janeiro marked on the east side of the map of South America.

MATTHIAS.—The owner of the watch and chain referred to has no claim on you.

TOMMY.—Robinia thrives in all parts of London, but it is rarely so planted as to ensure more than half its full development.

EMMA.—The announcement contains a palpable error, and cannot be inserted.

B. W. J.—As regards the selection of a sewing machine you cannot do better than apply to S. Davis & Co., 15, Blackman Street, Borough, London, S.E., for one of their illustrated lists, which contains every information, post free.

HANDY.—Some sort of description of personal appearance is desired.

DEAN.—The name is not only unattractive, but sufficient to frighten any young lady who is unacquainted with its possessor.

W.—Perhaps as an exhibition of a free and flourishing style of penmanship the writing may be pronounced good, but it may also be estimated to be too fantastical to be useful.

HERBIE.—We know of no small work on the subject of mixing colours for house painting, and suggest, if you have not served as an apprentice to the trade, that you should purchase your colours ready mixed of an artist's colourman.

EMODA.—To reach your case we must refer you to a free use of Oldridge's Balm of Columbia. It has been successfully before the public for some years as a certain restorer and beautifier of the human hair. Ask your chemist to supply you with a bottle.

OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

WITH THIS WEEK'S "LONDON READER"

IS PUBLISHED

OUR CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER,

PRICE TWOPENCE,

Containing some Well Written Tales by Authors of Great Repute.

40 PAGES,

BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED.

MATER'S DARLING, AMANDA, and PILOT, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Mater's Darling is twenty, dark brown eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition. Amanda is twenty-five, auburn hair, dark eyes, tall. Pilot is twenty-one, fair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of music.

DARK-EYED MAGGIE, twenty, good-looking, curly hair, would like to correspond with a tall young man about twenty-three, blue eyes.

ELBERT, twenty-seven, fair, good-looking, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with means.

EDITH and HILDA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Edith is seventeen, dark, handsome. Hilda is sixteen, loving, tall.

FANNY and NELLIE, two friends, wish to correspond with two gentlemen. Fanny is nineteen, fair, good-looking. Nellie is eighteen, fond of children and music, and loving.

TOM and JIM, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Tom is twenty-two, medium height. Jim is twenty-one, and fair.

JANEY would like to correspond with a gentleman about thirty-six.

VIOLET and LILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two Manchester young gentlemen. Violet is nineteen, brown hair, hazel eyes, thoroughly domesticated, fond of music. Lily is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of children, good-tempered.

WHEN OUR JACK COMES HOME FROM SEA.

THERE will be merry hearts and happy greetings,
Merry words and joyous greetings,
When our Jack comes home from sea;
There will be cheerful looks and hearts the
lightest,
Loving words and eyes the brightest,
When his dear old face we see.

So gently blow the winds that waft him,
Homeward bound across the main;
Quickly guide him, stars, in safety
Once more home again.

There will be longing hearts and smiling faces,
Loving thoughts as bright hope traces,
The day our Jack comes home from sea;
There will be true hearts beating, true hands
meeting,
Tears of gladness at the greeting,
When his dear old face we see.

So gently flow the tides that waft him
Swiftly now across the main:
Sweetly shine the stars that guide him
To our longing arms again.

O. P.

W. R. W. and H. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Respondents must be fond of music.

MABEL H., eighteen, dark hair and eyes, of medium height, would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony.

MOLLIE and POLLIE, three friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Mollie is of medium height, brown hair, blue eyes. Pollie is tall, brown hair, grey eyes.

F. G. and D. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. F. G. is twenty-two, dark, tall, dark hair and eyes. D. S. is twenty-two, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home. Respondents must be twenty, loving.

W. D. and E. R., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. W. D. is twenty-one, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, good-tempered. E. R. is seventeen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition.

H. N. and H. B., two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. H. N. is dark, tall, fond of home and dancing, hazel eyes. H. B. is twenty, light brown hair and eyes.

ELONA G., twenty-two, fond of home and children, golden hair, blue eyes, loving, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, dark hair, brown eyes, good-looking, medium height, fond of home and children.

M. C., twenty-two, fair, dark blue eyes, tall, domesticated, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-five, dark hair and eyes.

WILLIAM, nineteen, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age with a view to matrimony.

RICHARD, twenty-one, good-looking, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

MOLLY, eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes, loving, of medium height, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, fond of home.

ROBERT, twenty-one, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

CONSTANCE, twenty, dark, light brown hair, grey eyes, fond of home and children, medium height, wishes to correspond with a young man about the same age, fair, fond of home.

JIMMY and RALPH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Jimmy is twenty-one, fond of home, dark hair, blue eyes. Ralph is twenty, dark hair and eyes, fond of music and dancing, good-tempered.

EVANGELINE, twenty-six, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young man.

D. P., twenty, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy.

G. C. and D. C., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. G. C. is twenty-four, handsome, dark. D. C. is fair, blue eyes, good-tempered.

S. H., twenty-two, dark hair, hazel eyes, medium height, fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-six, medium height, good-looking, fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

M. D. is responded to by—**A. A.,** seventeen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

EMILY by—**Herbert,** twenty-two, good-looking, dark, medium height.

NELLIE by—**Ralph,** twenty, tall, light hair, fair.

E. P. by—**Slaving George,** twenty, dark hair and eyes, tall.

C. D. by—**Maud C.,** medium height, light brown hair, blue eyes.

J. G. by—**Evelyn S.,** auburn hair, dark blue eyes.

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